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The Music Magazine

THE BEATLES

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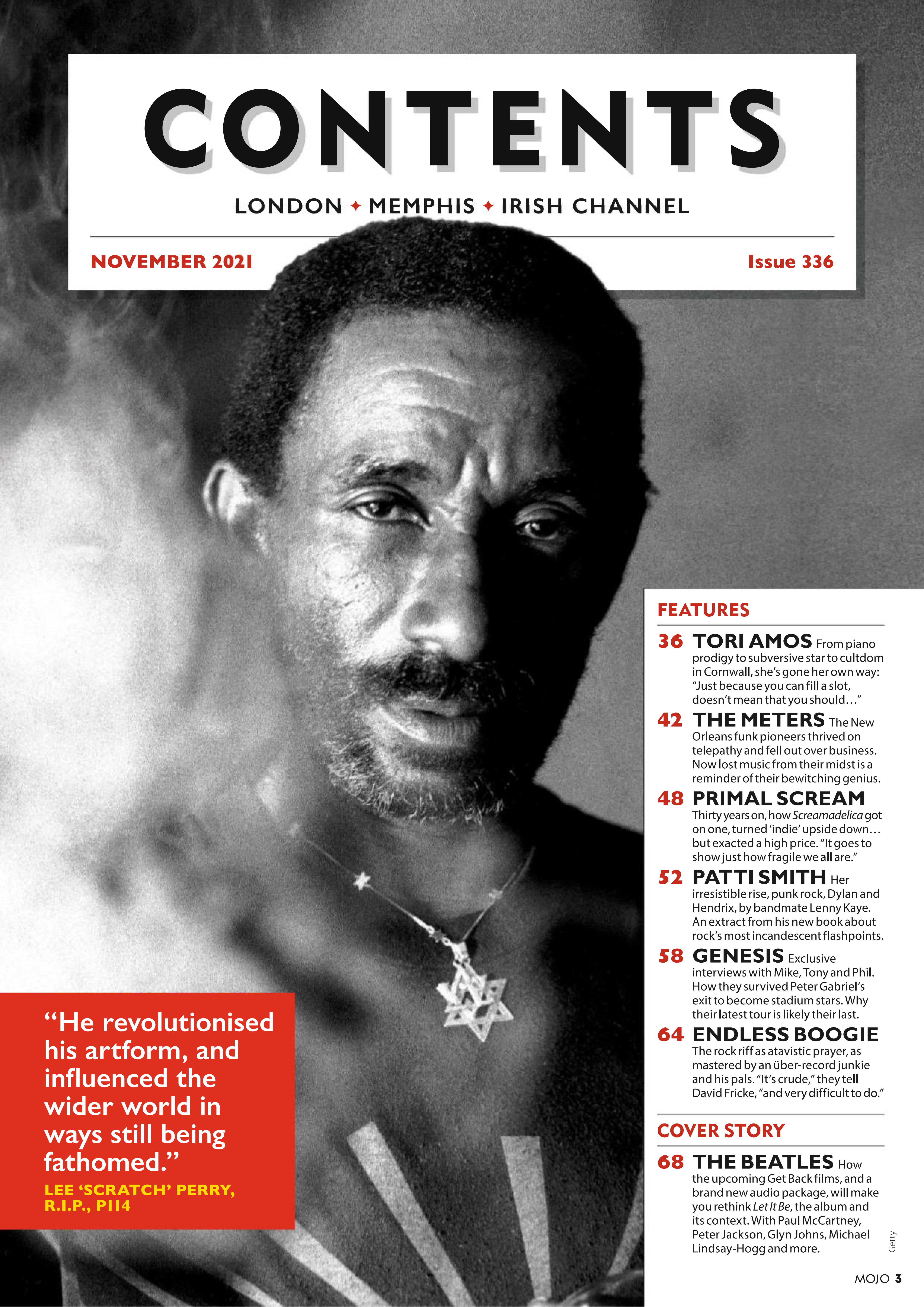
NOVEMBER 2021 Issue 336



> “He revolutionised his artform, and influenced the wider world in ways still being fathomed.”
>
> **LEE ‘SCRATCH’ PERRY, R.I.P., P114**

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Getty

Circuit Des Yeux's Haley Fohr gets airborne: Albums, page 90.

MOJO

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28 SHEL TALMY He was the feedback king of punchy production who directed early classics for The Who and The Kinks. But where's he been for the past 50 years? Cult Hero Shel tells all!

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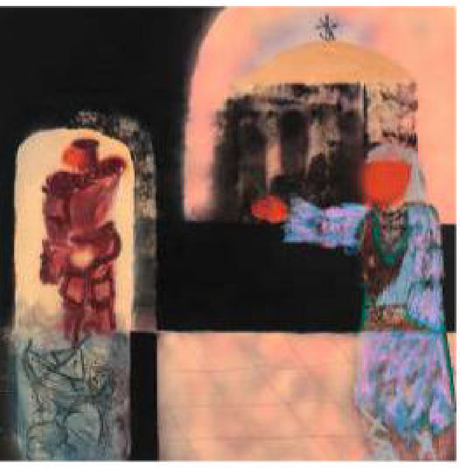

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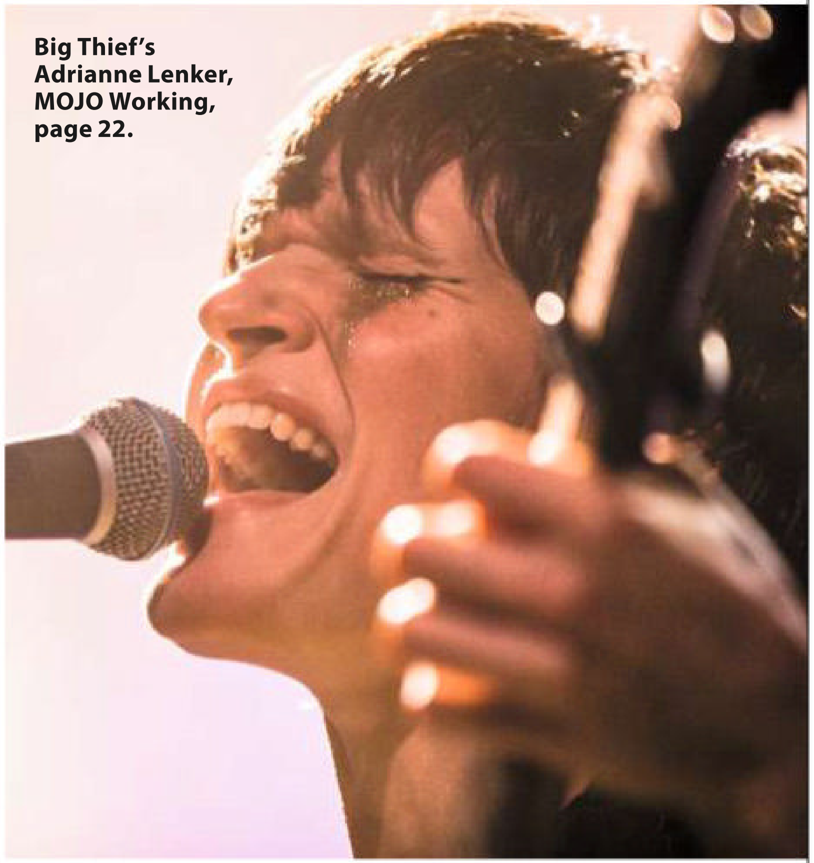
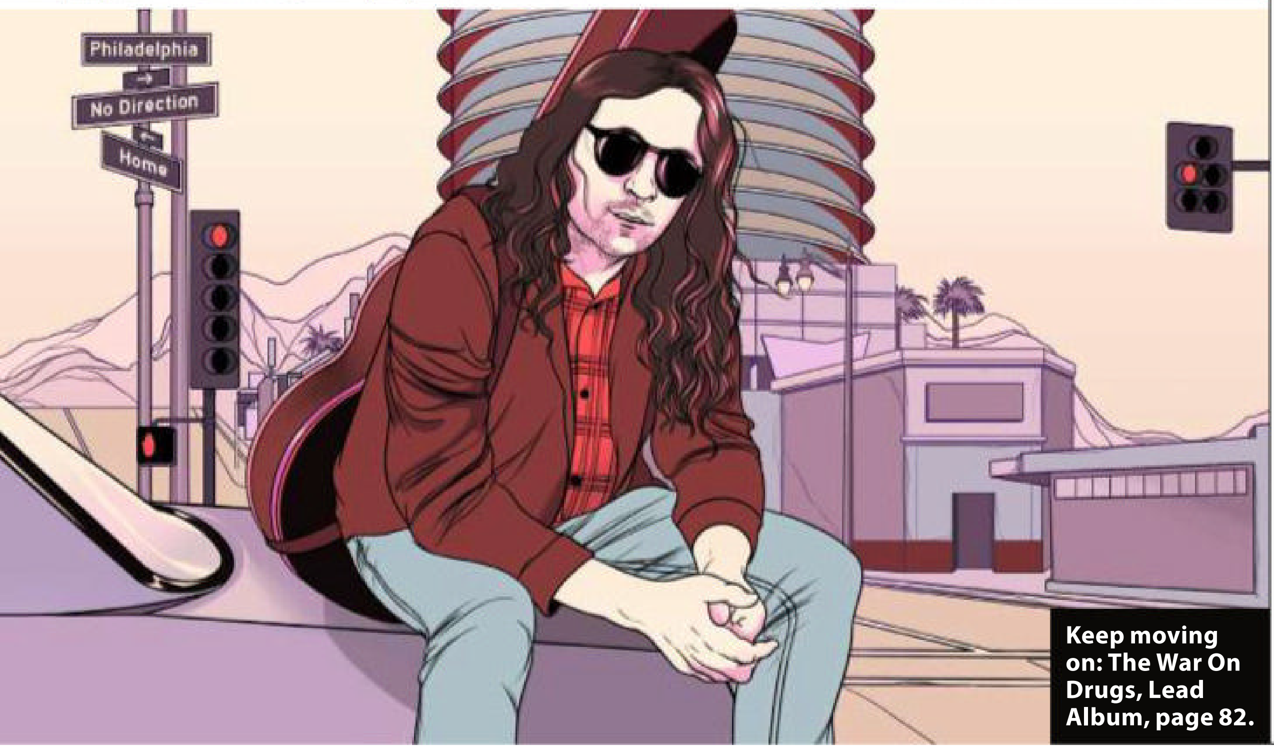


Big Thief's Adrianne Lenker, MOJO Working, page 22.



Keep moving on: The War On Drugs, Lead Album, page 82.

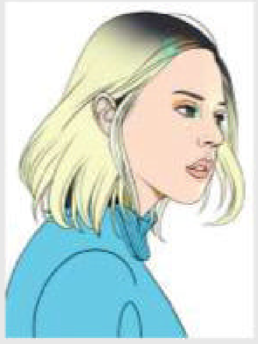
THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTORS INCLUDE...

John Harris

John has been writing for MOJO for 20 years, as well as covering politics at The Guardian. He's just had the fascinating experience of editing down hours of conversation caught during The Beatles' early 1969 sessions for the thumping official book that accompanies the new Get Back films. Read his findings from page 68.

Lenny Kaye

Lenny is an American guitarist, composer, record producer, writer, founding member of Patti Smith And Her Band, and the compiler of *Nuggets*, arguably the most influential compilation album ever. His new book, Lightning Striking, tracing the key flashpoints in rock'n'roll history, is extracted from page 52.



Janelle Barone

An illustrator based in Melbourne, Janelle Barone loves to tell visual stories and make everyday things more intriguing. She illustrates this month's Lead Album on page 83 and you can find a range of her editorial and commercial work at: www.janelle-barone.com or follow her on Instagram: @janelle.barone

Janelle Barone, Ulf Holberg, Alamy

THE BEATLES

LET IT BE

The final album from The Beatles remixed with additional content collecting outtakes, jams, rehearsals, studio chat and the previously unreleased Get Back album from 1969. Includes 100 page book with new essays, track-by-track recording information, unseen photos, memorabilia, tape boxes and more.

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"Fab gear!"

MOJO presents 15 customised Beatles covers

starring The Black Keys, Richard Thompson, Jim James, Swamp Dogg, The 13th Floor Elevators, P.P. Arnold and more!

1 The Black Keys

She Said, She Said (Vinyl Version)

Alongside choice R.L. Burnside, Junior Kimbrough and Muddy Waters tunes, Dan Auerbach and Patrick Carney also burned through this *Revolver* classic on their 2002 debut, *The Big Come Up*. Shorn of psychedelic trim and kicked up a gear, She Said, She Said emerges as a raw and punchy garage rocker.

Written by Lennon & McCartney. Published by Sony/ATV Tunes LLC. From *The Big Come Up* (℗&©2002 Alive Naturalsound Records); www.alive-records.com

2 Richard Thompson

It Won't Be Long

When Thompson began his 1,000 Years Of Popular Music project, it was inevitable – that early snobbery notwithstanding – that The Beatles would be included, next to ancient folk songs and work by, Gilbert & Sullivan, Purcell, Hoagy Carmichael and Britney Spears. His pick was this belligerent acoustic bash through the *With The Beatles* opener, Judith Owen singing the essential "Yeahs".

Written by Lennon & McCartney. Published by 1963 Sony/ATV Music Publishing LLC ℗Beeswing Music ©Richard Thompson 2003.

3 James Booker

Eleanor Rigby

"The best black, gay, one-eyed junkie piano genius New Orleans has ever produced," as Dr. John called him, actually worked with a Beatle; Booker added the honky-tonk to Ringo's Have You Seen My Baby in 1973. Here, though, he elaborately revamps Eleanor Rigby with a Big Easy stride, at a late '70s club date at the Maple Leaf Bar, New Orleans.

Written by Lennon & McCartney. Published by Sony/ATV ℗&©1993 Rounder Records, a division of Concord Music Group.

4 Judy Collins

Golden Slumbers

Collins has been in the Beatles covers game longer than most: her take on In My Life was the title track of her sixth album, back in 1966. Forty-one years later, she rounded up a dozen more songs for *Judy Collins Sings Lennon & McCartney*, with that voice of uncanny purity having particular resonance on the *Abbey Road* lullaby.

Written by Lennon & McCartney. Published by Sony/ATV Music Publishing ℗&©2007 Cleopatra Records.

9 P.P. Arnold

Eleanor Rigby

Very different from Booker's instrumental, Arnold's Eleanor Rigby has the original's baroque feel (note the harpsichord solo), with a Mod-friendly backbeat. Off Arnold's second LP, 1968's *Kafunta*, which also featured Yesterday.

Written by Lennon & Mc Cartney. Published by Sony/ATV Music Publishing (UK) Ltd. ISRC GBAWA0210416. ℗1968 Immediate. An Original Immediate Recording. From *Kafunta* (Immediate Records IMSP 017). Inside the UK: Licensed from Sanctuary Records Group Ltd., a BMG Company / Outside UK: Courtesy of Charly Acquisitions Ltd, Licensed from LicenseMusic.com ApS.

10 Jim James

Long, Long, Long

If The Beatles' original had an ethereal cast, Jim James' solo Long, Long, Long is softer and more ghostly still. James recorded the song on 8-track, along with five other George Harrison tunes, in 2001, just days after Harrison died. They were only released, however, on the 2009 Tribute To EP. James and My Morning Jacket's excellent new LP is reviewed in this issue (page 85).

Written by Harrison. Published by Harrisongs Ltd (ASCAP) ℗&©2009 ATO Records, LLC. From *Tribute To* (ATO Records) www.atorecords.com

11 World Party

Cry Baby Cry

While much of *Fab Gear* focuses on reinventions, there's also room for a meticulous homage. Who better to recreate the chamber intricacies of Cry Baby Cry than World Party's Karl Wallinger, a painstaking Beatles-facing studio perfectionist. From 2012's *Arkeology*, a 5CD extravaganza of unreleased World Party music.

Written by Lennon & McCartney. From *Arkeology* ℗&©Seaview Records 2012. Original track published by Sony/ATV Tunes / ASCAP ℗&©1968 Lennon & McCartney. From *The White Album* (Apple Records); http://www.applecorps.com

12 Melvins

I Want To Hold Your Hand

Beatlemania revisited, now, by Washington grunge trailblazers the Melvins. This stomping I Want To Hold Your Hand ramps up the heaviness, but the song's irresistible pop core remains intact, even as the band – including Redd Kross' Steve McDonald and Butthole Surfer Jeff Pinkus, alongside lifers Dale Crover and King Buzzo – freak out at the end.

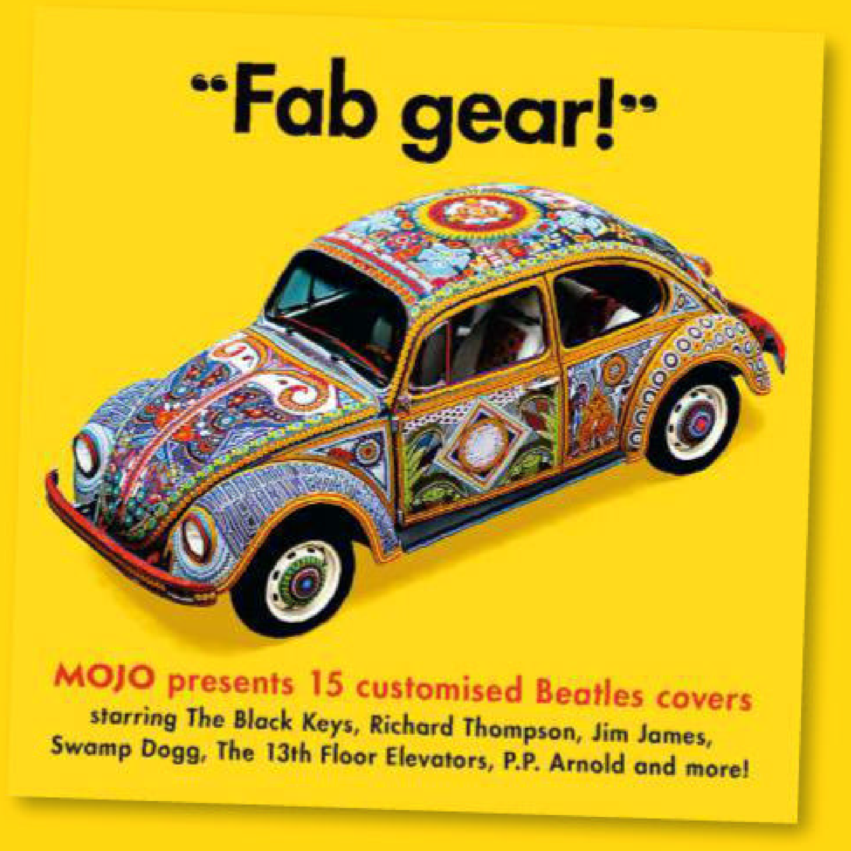
Written by Paul James McCartney, John Winston Lennon. From *Pinkus Abortion Technician* ℗&©2018 Ipecac Recordings.

Norman von Holtzendorff, O, Patrick Boissel, Scott Billington, Trevor Smith, Michael Wilson, Getty (5), Avalon.red

IN BEESWING, HIS RECENT AUTOBIOGRAPHY, RICHARD Thompson recalls being invited to Paul McCartney's 26th birthday party. "It shows how much of a musical snob I was at the time that I decided not to go," he writes regretfully. "To me, The Beatles were a 'pop' band and not to be taken seriously."

The Beatles, of course, really were a pop band, but one whose relentless creative energy meant that the boundaries of pop were being expanded and redrawn with most every release. Their records were at once immediate and profound, suitable for a three-minute slot on primetime radio and a lifetime of spiritual investigation. And their songs had a robustness that would endure in radically different settings.

Take, for instance, the 15 versions on this month's MOJO CD. For *Fab Gear*, we've dug deep into the archives to find some of our favourite and most transformative Beatles covers. Here, pop becomes funk, and jazz, and grunge; at home in a tiki bar, or a New Orleans carnival. A showcase of how The Beatles' music is for everyone – even a snobbish young folk-rocker, who grew up to see the error of his ways…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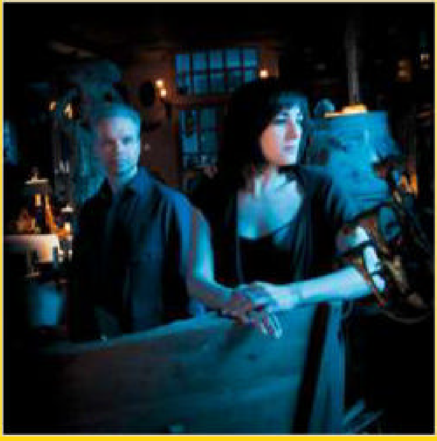


5 Damon And Naomi

While My Guitar Gently Weeps

The stealthy Massachusetts duo of Damon Krukowski and Naomi Yang, who came to prominence as two-thirds of Galaxie 500, take a typically delicate run at While My Guitar Gently Weeps on this 2005 cut. Frequent collaborator Michio Kurihara joins on electric guitar, his grace, subtlety and invention perfect for George Harrison's mission statement.

Written by George Harrison. ℗2005 Damon & Naomi. From *The Earth Is Blue* (20/20/20 Records); http://www.20-20-20.com/

6 Tackhead

Don't Let Me Down

There are three different versions of Don't Let Me Down on the new *Let It Be* box, but nothing remotely like this, as industrial funk savants Tackhead subject Lennon's plaintive love song to a zoned-out dub makeover. Frontman Bernard Fowler has been The Rolling Stones' first-call backing vocalist for over 30 years.

Written by Lennon & McCartney. Published by Sony/ATV Music Publishing LLC. ℗&©1969 The Beatles. From *Share>>Head* (Dude Records); http://www.duderecords.com

7 Bettye LaVette

The Word

LaVette's lengthy R&B career has encompassed stints at the seminal labels – Motown included – and in the company of the storied players The Beatles loved, and in 2010, she returned the compliment. *Interpretations: The British Rock Songbook* included takes on solo Paul, George and Ringo songs, as well as this vibrant reading of the *Rubber Soul* gem.

Written by John Lennon & Paul McCartney. Paul McCartney (Sony/ATV Tunes LLC (ASCAP)), John Lennon (Sony/ATV Tunes LLC (ASCAP)).

8 Swamp Dogg

Lady Madonna

Cuffed, Collared And Tagged, the third LP by outsider soul maverick Swamp Dogg, might be most famous for its version of John Prine's Sam Stone. But you'll also find this terrific Lady Madonna. It's relatively straight by Swamp Dogg's wild standards, but stick around for some profoundly uninhibited scatting in the last 40 seconds.

Written by Lennon & McCartney. Published by Sony/ATV ℗&©1972 Cream/Hi Records, under exclusive license from Fat Possum Records. From *Cuffed, Collared And Tagged*; www.fatpossum.com

13 The 13th Floor Elevators

The Word

As The Beatles expanded into psychedelic territory, a generation of bands were inspired to head for more extreme sonic zones. Here the Texas band, live in San Francisco in '66, psychedelicise the moptop era.

Written by Lennon & McCartney. Published by Sony/ATV Music Publishing Ltd. From the forthcoming LP *Live In California* (International Artists IA#14). ISRC GBAWA0915864. ℗2011 Charly Acquisitions Ltd. An Original International Artists Recording. Courtesy of Charly Acquisitions Ltd. Licensed from LicenseMusic.com ApS.

14 She & Him

I Should Have Known Better

Cocktails aloft, as noted actor Zooey Deschanel and Americana MVP M. Ward spirit a *Hard Day's Night* song off to the South Pacific. Paul Brainard serenades the tiki bar with his steel guitar, Deschanel stifles a giggle, and if Beatles songs have often been repurposed as easy listening, they've rarely turned out as classily.

Written by Lennon & McCartney. Published by Sony/ATV Tunes LLC/Beatles (ASCAP). From *She & Him Volume One* ℗&©Merge Records 2008 www.mergerecords.com

15 Joshua Redman

Let It Be

An auspicious jazz combo to close, with saxophone scion Redman (son of Ornette sideman Dewey Redman) joined by Brad Mehldau (piano) and Brian Blade (drums, familiar from Dylan, Joni, Herbie Hancock and Wayne Shorter projects). Let It Be's gospel accents rise to the fore, but there's also space for Redman to stretch out into freer territory.

Written by John Lennon & Paul McCartney. Published by Sony/ATV Tunes obo Northern Songs Catalog. From *Walking Shadows* ℗&©2013 Nonesuch Records Inc.

"The ultimate backstage sneak peek!"
THE INSIDE STORY ON GET BACK BY THE PEOPLE WHO MADE IT
BEGINS PAGE 68

CARGO COLLECTIVE

VANISHING TWIN

OOKII GEKKOU

FIRE RECORDS LP / CD

Vanishing Twin explore new ground on ‘Ookii Gekkou’ incorporating elements of afrofunk, outer jazz and avant-garde. Ltd edition gatefold vinyl. “One of the most original and exciting acts of the moment” The Quietus.

BRIGID MAE POWER

BURNING YOUR LIGHT

FIRE RECORDS LP / CD

New covers release featuring takes on Songs: Ohia, Townes Van Zandt, Aretha Franklin, Patsy Cline and more “A remarkable Irish singer emerges from filigree and shadow” Mojo.

NATIVE SOUL

TEENAGE DREAMS

AWESOME TAPES FROM AFRICA 2LP / CD

South African amapiano electronic music from a young duo who explore a hauntingly contemporary, mostly instrumental interpretation of the currently trending style.

APRIL MAGAZINE

IF THE CEILING WERE A KITE: VOL. 1

TOUGH LOVE LP

Recorded over a span of about 2 years, If The Ceiling Were A Kite is a document of things losing definition and time gone slack. A handful of cryptic indie pop recordings nestled in warm aerosol hiss & scrappy hand-drawn cover art, reflecting their SF Bay Area home.

MAC MCCAUGHAN

THE SOUND OF YOURSELF

MERGE RECORDS LP / CD

An album of ambient and pop gems featuring contributions from Mary Lattimore, TORRES, Yo La Tengo, and more.

JERUSALEM IN MY HEART

QALAQ

CONSTELLATION LP / CD

Qalaq = “deep worry”. The renowned 21st century Arab-Levantine contemporary music/art project returns with a devastating album of collaborative tracks including Moor Mother, Tim Hecker, Lucrecia Dalt, Greg Fox & many more.

KASIM SULTON

KASIM 2021

DEKO ENTERTAINMENT CD

Kasim Sulton is best known for his work with Utopia, singing on the top 40 hit “Set Me Free”, Kasim 2021 features stand out tracks like “More Love” and “Fastcar”.

CINDY

1:2

TOUGH LOVE LP / CD

Cindy’s 3rd LP is the quietly devastating 1:2. Unlike the previous records, this isn’t dream-pop sunshine bliss; there’s an unsettling quality mixed with a hazy atmosphere that makes this latest record 100% addicting & the perfect antidote to comfort listening.

WYNDOW

WYNDOW

SUMMER CRITICS LP / CD

Debut album from Wyndow, Laura J Martin and Lavinia Blackwall’s new Kosmiche-Psych-Folk project. Woven from threads sent across the wires, Wyndow strikes new ground.

S. RAEKWON

WHERE I’M AT NOW

FATHER DAUGHTER LP / CD

S. Raekwon, aka New York-based singer/songwriter Steven Reynolds, touches upon his experiences as a biracial Black man living in America in this gorgeous self-produced and recorded debut album.

JULIA SHAPIRO

ZORKED

SUICIDE SQUEEZE LP / CD

On Zorked, Julia Shapiro’s (Chastity Belt) sophomore album, she jumped into the deep end in search of something new–and found power in heavy sounds.

HOLY HIVE

HOLY HIVE

BIG CROWN RECORDS LP / CD

Holy Hive picks up where they left off on their debut album and pushes their Folk Soul sound into new places on their highly anticipated eponymous sophomore album.

THE RUGGED NUGGETS

ODDS & ENDS

COLEMINE RECORDS LP / CD

The debut LP from The Rugged Nuggets hits hard and demands to be turned up loud with the windows rolled down. With swooning strings, breezy guitars & tough as nails drums, Odds & Ends epitomizes a mellow vibe.

REB FOUNTAIN

IRIS

FLYING NUN RECORDS LP / CD

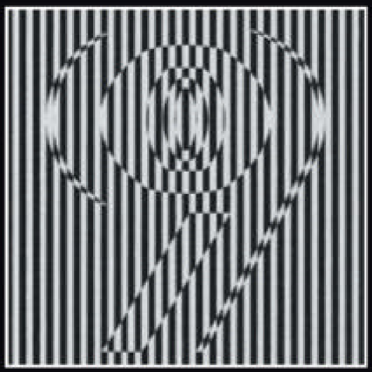
Combining pop elements with her trademark noir sound; IRIS elevates Reb Fountain’s music to new heights. The album boasts authentic and anthemic tunes that leave an instant and indelible impression.

GRACE PETRIE

CONNECTIVITY

THE ROBOT NEEDS HOME COLLECTIVE LP / CD

The new record from folksinger Grace Petrie is an exploration of connections between people. “The musical soul of her generation” - HuffPost “An effervescent charm-bomb of a performer” New Yorker.



POND

9

SPINNING TOP LP / CD

On their highly anticipated ninth album 9, Pond’s explorations are funnelled into electrifying bursts of pure psych-pop joy. Featuring the elastic hipped robo-funk of “America’s Cup” and psych-rock jam “Human Touch.”

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ALL BACK TO MY PLACE

THE STARS REVEAL THE SONIC DELIGHTS GUARANTEED TO GET THEM GOING...

Snail Mail

THE BALLAD OF LINDSEY JORDAN

What music are you currently grooving to?

I've been listening to **Alycia Bella**, who I recently became familiar with, and I've become a really big fan. *Black Metal 2* by **Dean Blunt**, and **Gal Costa** too, that's my recent rotation.

What, if push comes to shove, is your all-time favourite album?

It's so hard to choose. I really connect with *Carrie & Lowell* by **Sufjan Stevens**, I think that's the golden example for sad songwriting. I can listen to it start to finish. I would play it and my roommates would say, "I can't believe you're listening to this again," because it sets the tone for the night.

What was the first record you ever bought? And where did you buy it?

It was *Funeral* by **Arcade Fire**, at a little record store called Tracks On Wax in Maryland, near to where I grew up. I don't know if I had the record or a record player first, but I was very excited about it. *Funeral* is such a moment in indie rock that everyone feels nostalgic about.

Which musician, other than yourself, have you ever wanted to be?

Prince has it all, his songwriting and guitar playing is insane. I don't think anyone is comparable, he's the coolest.

What do you sing in the shower?

Fire & Desire by **Drake**, from *Views*. It's a really intense song for the shower.

What is your favourite Saturday night record?

It's got to be *Hats* by **Blue Nile**, I live in Manhattan, and that album has such 'a city at night' vibe, it makes perfect sense to me.

And your Sunday morning record?

Live In Sausalito 1973 by **John Fahey** is a very "clean up the apartment from Saturday night" style. Peaceful and instrumental, and quiet time in the morning is important. It's well-suited.

Snail Mail's new album Valentine is released in November.

Barry Adamson

THE WEEGEE OF THE BASS

What music are you currently grooving to?

A rich mixture of old and new. **Sault**, **Dry Cleaning**, **Adrian Crowley**, **Sarah Tandy**. Then there's **Muddy Waters**, **Mississippi Fred McDowell**. Lots of reggae too. **King Tubby** and **Scientist** in particular.

What, if push comes to shove, is your all-time favourite album?

It changes depending on who's doing the pushing but I'll go with **Tubby Hayes**' *Late Spot At Scott's*. A live jazz album of incredible force and musical dexterity, and one I've gone back to again and again since I was a kid listening to my dad's records.

©Johan Bergman, Helen Rob

What was the first record you ever bought? And where did you buy it?

It was possibly Wet Dream by **Max Romeo** aged around 11 from Paul Marsh's record shop in Moss Side. We kids used to go from school every Friday to buy a single with our pocket money.

Which musician, other than yourself, have you ever wanted to be?

David Bowie probably. I was offered the chance to meet him while playing bass with **Iggy Pop** but I declined. I still listen to him for inspiration and musicianship and arrangement skills.

What do you sing in the shower?

Usually, something I'm working on to see if I'm going along the right lines and getting somewhere.

What is your favourite Saturday night record?

Has to be Windowlicker by **Aphex Twin**. I'm 'there', as it were, straight away. The whole song is a phenomenal piece of work that gets under the skin and transforms every sense.

And your Sunday morning record?

A new one, The Hunt, by drummer and bandleader **Makaya McCraven**. Pure music to scramble eggs to, whilst still coming around. The whole album, *Universal Beings*, is just a simply beautiful collection of bold new jazz directions.

Barry Adamson's memoir Up Above The City, Down Beneath The Stars is published by Omnibus on September 30.

Don McLean

AND HE LOVES YOU SO

What music are you currently grooving to?

My own, because I'm making a new album called *American Boys*. Most of the music around I look down on. I know it's all made with computers, it's Auto-Tuned, the guy isn't singing, and it's a piece of shit song!

What, if push comes to shove, is your favourite album?

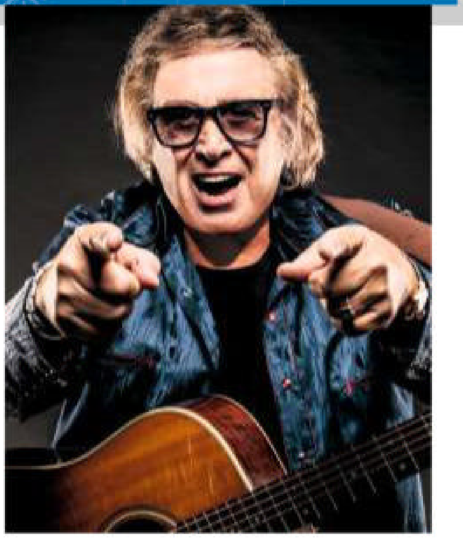
Elvis Presley's *Golden Records*, the first compilation they put out. I also love ***Sinatra-Basie***. It has a dark, sinister sound, like they're in a nightclub. When I wrote And I Love You So I wanted 40 strings because of the Sinatra records I had.

What was the first record you ever bought? And where did you buy it?

Probably a **Buddy Holly** album, *The "Chirping" Crickets* or the album *Buddy Holly*. I bought it at the House Of Music in New Rochelle. The diversity of his music made an impression on me.

Which musician, other than yourself, have you ever wanted to be?

Buddy Holly, but I would drive a lot and not fly! I never wanted to be in a group because you can't determine the person's talent. **Lennon & McCartney** were unbeatable, but as solo artists I wasn't that thrilled.



What do you sing in the shower?

The other day I burst out with an antique old folk song, The Isle Of St Helena, which is about Napoleon Bonaparte being isolated there. Or Come Fly With Me. I cover a lot of ground.

What is your favourite Saturday night record?

In The Summertime by **Mungo Jerry**. If you get sand in your shoes, listen to that one! I play a lot of **Beach Boys**. They invented this whole surf and car culture. It's incredible what they did.

And your Sunday morning record?

Elvis Presley's gospel album, *His Hand In Mine*. A typical Sunday for me is like any other day, I don't go to church, and I don't like religion.

Don McLean celebrates 50 years of American Pie with a UK Tour in 2022. www.donmclean.com for tickets.

> "Makaya McCraven... pure music to scramble eggs to."
> **BARRY ADAMSON**

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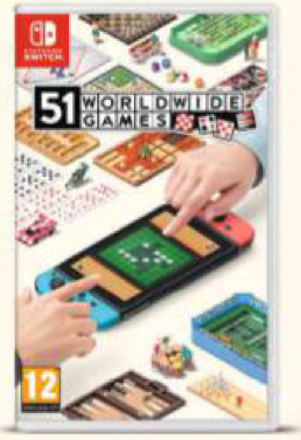

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Theories, rants, etc.

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MARCH 1969, AND THE TANGLED PATHS of The Beatles and the Stones converged on Olympic Studios in south-west London. Here, Glyn Johns worked on the mixes for *Let It Be* – even though his unadorned versions would only see the light of day now, in autumn 2021. Here too, The Rolling Stones were beginning the sessions for *Let It Bleed*.

A year later, The Beatles were no more, but the Stones have continued to defy most logic ever since. In the ensuing 50-odd years, their union has redefined what it means to grow older. A young person's game has been reconfigured as a lifelong pursuit, an infinite career made to seem plausible. They have seemed, improbably, indestructible.

But as we were putting the finishing touches to this edition of MOJO, with its in-depth look at the Get Back movie and the *Let It Be* box set, the remarkable Charlie Watts passed away, aged 80. Every death is its own tragedy – and this month, as we also mourn Lee 'Scratch' Perry and Don Everly, has been a particularly tough one in our world. We are fortunate, though, to have so much astonishing music to soundtrack our memories of these giants. Great art endures. Go and play Monkey Man, or Roast Fish And Cornbread, or I Wonder If I Care As Much; they're all, in a way, still with us.

JOHN MULVEY, EDITOR

An absolute paradise of music, art and pure enjoyment

In 1961, at 11 years old, I entered a café in St Albans with my parents, and was instantly transfixed by a record playing on the jukebox. It was The Everly Brothers singing Temptation. The hairs on the back of my neck bristled and I felt a wave of excitement that triggered a passion for music that has grown ever since. I bought a copy of the 45rpm single (backed with Stick With Me Baby) the next week, even though my family did not own a record player. A few weeks later my father bought a simple deck from St Albans market and connected it to the valve radio, so I could play the record over and over again.

Consequently I was very saddened to read of the recent death of Don Everly. The brothers' voices blended beautifully to the extent that they melded into a seemingly effortless harmony, which has never been matched by any other duo. Temptation wasn't the best recording they made, but it has a special significance for me. Many US musicians talk of The Beatles' appearance on the Ed Sullivan Show as the significant moment in their musical lives; for me it was the moment I first heard the Everlys in that café.

Andy Pegg, via e-mail

It's all frightfully romantic

I took a girlfriend, Hillary Tope, to see Faust on the 1973 tour at Birmingham Town Hall [MOJO 335]. She was very beautiful but straight, and her favourite music was Demis Roussos. However, she loved the darkness, the pneumatic drill, the pinball zinging around the hall, the extremely loud constant drumbeat and the sound of the venue's magnificent organ hovering above their music. An absolutely astonishing concert. A week later, Alan Freeman on one of the Radio 1 Roadshows in Kidderminster picked her out of the crowd and asked her what her favourite music was. She replied, "Faust and Demis Roussos." Freeman, for once, was struck dumb for a few seconds. I think it is safe to say that is the only time such a combination has featured on Radio 1.

Stephen Dorril, Netherthong, Holmfirth

An imaginative and spirited girl

What a joy to open MOJO 333 and find one of my all-time favourites, Ellen Foley's *Spirit Of St. Louis* – or as I like to call it, The Great Lost Clash Album – as your Buried Treasure. It seems Strummer and Jones were nursing an ongoing romantic identification with the anti-fascists of the Spanish ➢

Civil War, and the presentation of Foley as a 1930s cabaret chanteuse tied into that. I was a bit taken aback to see her dissing the contributions of Tymon Dogg, whose Indestructible I consider the album's best track. But hey, she's the star of this magnificent obscurity and her vocal prowess cannot be denied. Having bought multiple copies as gifts, I got back multiple quizzical looks; this record was so anachronistic it was bound to fail commercially. Now that more listeners have discovered Edith Piaf, perhaps more will seek out La Foley's gem.

Al Szopinski, Chicago, Illinois

Only the best people fight against all obstacles in pursuit of happiness

Your article on the film Under The Volcano [MOJO 335] gives the impression AIR Studios in Montserrat has ceased to exist. While not in full use still, I have an album called *Montserrat*, recorded by the one and only John Otway in 2016. The deluxe version has a booklet about how they managed to record there and the contact with George Martin's son, as well as how welcoming the island was to them.

Maybe not in the same league as The Rolling Stones, The Police et al, but not to be ignored. Hopefully you will cover John's 5,000th gig at the Shepherd's Bush Empire next April with a major article about the man himself.

Colin Coates, via e-mail

It's sort of like heaven, only better

I enjoyed your article about Joni & Jimi [MOJO 334] and the mention of Café Le Hibou in Ottawa, which I have been to, although it is long gone now. And congrats on getting the café's name right. American writer David Yaffe's very good Joni bio Reckless Daughter called the venue "the Libeau coffeehouse". Canadians take French in school – not so, south of the border. Hibou is French for owl.

Madeleine Hague, Acton, Ontario

How odd… yet how pleasing

It was somewhat synchronistic that your How To Buy on Stiff Records appeared in the same issue as Lew Lewis's obit [MOJO 332]. I got Boogie On The Street (on Stiff) and Out For A Lark (on UA) among a bunch of 45s I'd sent away for from Bizarre Records in London in 1976 and '77 – pretty much the only way you could get that kind of thing in Toronto back then. When the Feelgoods played the El Mocambo in November '77 and held court at a table between sets, I asked Lee Brilleaux what Lewis was up to now. "Mad Lew? Only had to get him out of jail before we flew over here, didn't I?" So I guess there were a few problems even then. I was fortunate enough to pick up the *Save The Wail* album in London two years later. Of course, as well as playing on the Stiff single, Brilleaux also put up some of the money that allowed the label to get off the ground.

Ian Mitchell, Oshawa, Ontario

How sad it is for others they cannot appreciate our genius

Yes, I could go on about the amazing reporting you do on so many bands. Needless to say I savour every issue. But it's time for Los Lobos, a truly gifted band of Mexican/American musicians who have been playing together over 45 years, the same five guys… a national treasure. This is a band without a history of drug abuse, infighting or line-up changes. The new album *Native Sons* is a stunner with a great backstory, and now is the perfect time to talk about them. And put 'em on the cover for cryin' out loud.

Erik Van Anglen, West Chester, Pennsylvania

There could be a breakthrough at any time!

Thank you for the How To Buy on Kevin Coyne [MOJO 334]. I don't think I'll ever be a big fan, but at least I can now differentiate between the Kevins Coyne and Ayers: always a source of confusion to me. Next I hope to understand the difference between John Cale, John Cage and JJ Cale. Many thanks for being MOJO.

Steve Temple, Kenilworth

I think we should avert trouble before it starts

As a long-term reader and subscriber, I was delighted to see my photo of Andrew Collins on page 4 of MOJO 334. It came from an interview we did for my blog: https://wholehoggblog.wordpress.com/ A cover feature on Ivor Cutler, a behind the scenes dive into *Dirk Wears White Sox*, an interview with David Boulter and a feature on Sister Rosetta Tharpe and we'll say no more about it.

Gavin Hogg, Sheffield

It's a three-act story with a tragic end

It's very rare – in fact never – that I either work out or even start to deduce the letter headlines, but MOJO 334's Lord Of The Rings references jumped out at me. A nod, I assume, to your cover star Planty and his former band's love for all things Tolkien.

Jon Perks, Worcester

We feel a trifle nervous…

Just had my latest subscriber issue drop through the letterbox [MOJO 335] and am overjoyed to find the first edition in so many months that I can't remember which doesn't have a single mention, in dedicated article or in passing, of the most wildly overrated pop combo of all time, or any of its members. Please don't mention them here (The Beatles).

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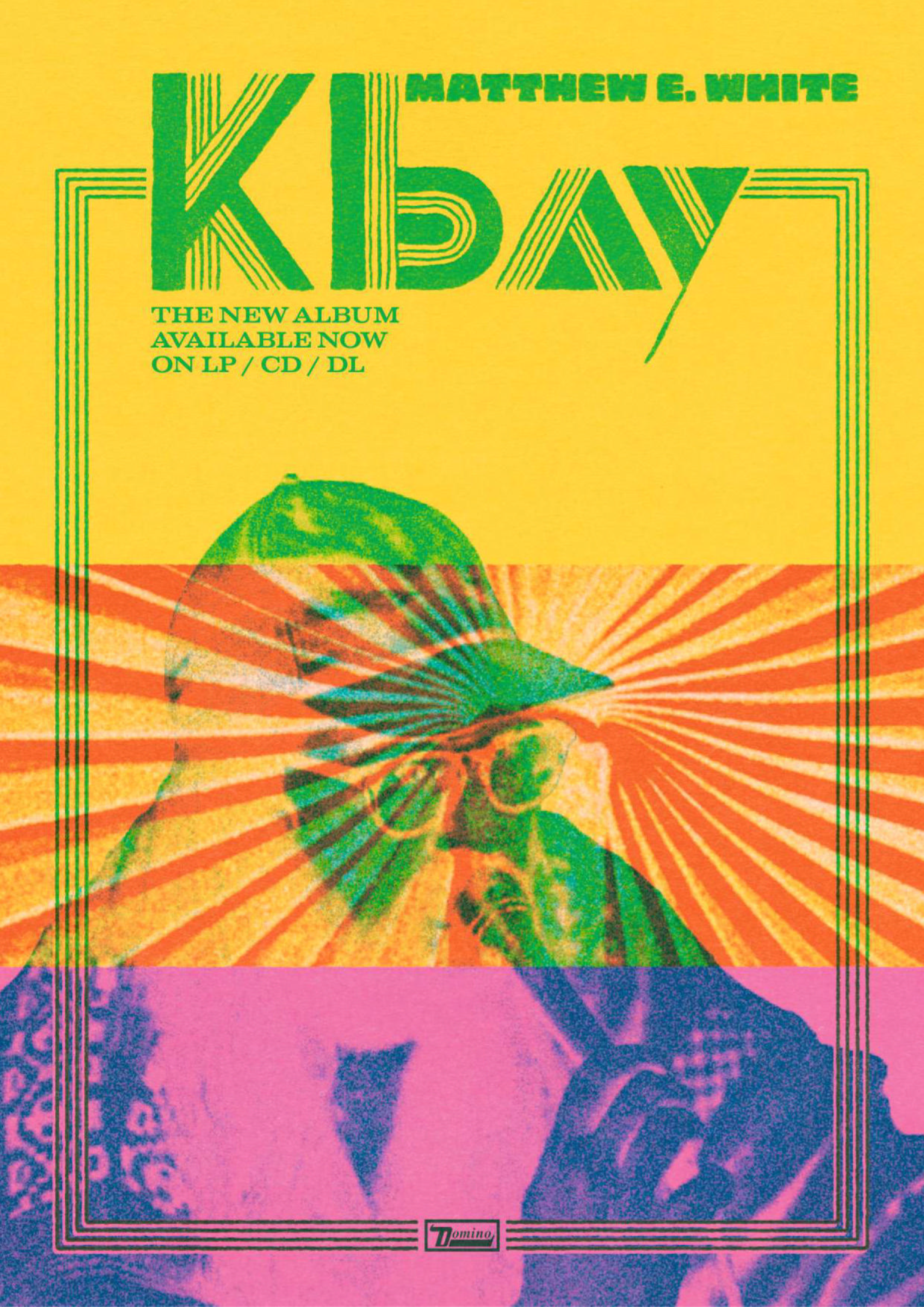
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CHARLIE WATTS
1941-2021

Steady Rollin' Man

Charlie Watts, dearly departed, was the beating heart of The Rolling Stones, the key to their peerless groove, writes **Mat Snow**.

"CHARLIE SWINGS VERY nicely," wrote 19-year-old Keith Richards in a 1963 diary entry of his band's new and very expensive hiring on drums, "but can't rock. Fabulous guy, though."

In the month since the sudden, shocking news of Charlie Watts's death at the age of 80, the outpouring of grieving tributes, anecdotes and impressions all attest to how Keith's third assessment was absolutely correct. As to the first, no arguments there either. But it's the second that now – and even then or only very shortly thereafter – seems so very wide of the mark.

So why did Keith – and Mick Jagger and Brian Jones, the core Stones trio dwelling in squalid circumstances in Chelsea's Edith Grove – reduce themselves to starvation and shoplifting to stump up the £5 weekly stipend sufficient to lure the 21-year-old drummer from Alexis Korner's Blues Incorporated?

Because, as Richards has been saying for many decades about modern rock'n'roll bands, they can all rock but not many can roll. Charlie could roll.

Roll – swing, call it what you will – was rare and could not be taught if it wasn't innately there. But rock was another matter.

Unfailingly modest about his drumming abilities compared to the cream of American and British jazzmen whom he idolised, Charlie knew that what natural talent could not supply, hard work and study would have to instead. Besides, it would be rude not to. Charlie was nothing if not polite.

The trio – and Ian Stewart, the pianist relegated to the sidelines because he didn't look the part even though he sounded it – knew their man. Charlie had the work ethic to teach himself, and rock would come. And it did.

Unexpectedly for a man who deplored the hippy era as "the silliest period", not for him at all, Watts happily identified as "a Gemini," as he told Esquire's Robin Eggar in 1998. "Home to me is Stravinsky and Picasso, Miles and Fred Astaire, and out there is all this other crap, groupies and all that rubbish. I can divorce the two things very easily." On the one hand Watts was the epitome of post-war pragmatic working-class self-betterment, a war baby who grew up in a prefab in Wembley, north-west London, to a dad who delivered parcels for the railways, progressing from horse and cart to Bedford van. And on the other he was the romantic in love with the world of Miles Davis and the green shirt, Charlie Parker and the Prince of Wales check suit – the sound and the style, the glamour and the genius, the self-medication and self-martyrdom in the sacred cause of jazz.

At first Watts thought he could juggle both worlds. A Mod before Mod was a thing (despite his low opinion of Italian tailoring), he could draw, and went to art school, in Harrow, not to doss and learn how to think outside the box like Pete Townshend a few years later in Ealing, but to equip himself for a proper career wielding Staedtler, Rotring and Letraset in a West End advertising agency, starting at Charlie Daniels Studios in 1960. Upwardly mobile, he was suited and salaried in an office, not overalled and waged at the wheel of a truck like his dad.

By night, however, he would be found down the clubs of Soho, worshipping at the feet of the very few American jazz legends that visa quotas would allow into the country to play, plus the British disciples hardly less virtuosic even if they shone with a dimmer, home-grown glamour.

It was a world introduced to him at the age of 12 by his Uncle Charlie playing Earl Bostic's Flamingo on 78. At first the alto sax appealed, but Charlie Boy (as he was distinguished in a family of Charlies) would actually keep time to the record with a rolled-up newspaper alongside his next-door neighbour David Green on bass, a lifelong friend who would go on to play ➢

> "The Stones were one hell of a dance band. And the engine behind their irresistible danceability was Charlie."

The king of swing: Charlie Watts at the Halcyon Hotel, London, March 1991.

The Rolling Stones, 1965 (from left) Brian Jones, Bill Wyman, Keith Richards, Mick Jagger, Watts; (left, from top) Ealing Jazz Club, 1962, Charlie behind Cyril Davies (left) and Alexis Korner; aged 2, with mother Lillian and father Charlie, Piccadilly Circus, London, 1943; (insets, right) LPs featuring UK drummers Bobby Orr and Phil Seamen; the Gretsch groove.

< with such greats as tenorist Ben Webster. The two young jazzniks swapped Duke Ellington, Jelly Roll Morton, Johnny Dodds, Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie records. Another pivotal point for Charlie was hearing West Coast baritone saxophonist Gerry Mulligan's Walking Shoes with Chico Hamilton on drums. Struggling with the fingering of a banjo he'd bought himself aged 14, Charlie whipped off the neck and strings to convert it to a primitive snare, and a few months later was given his first proper kit for Christmas, painting 'Chico' on the bass drumhead.

Not that Watts saw drums as anything more than a hobby. He would rather drink in the glamour of the dancehall bands suited and booted in a blaze of brass than be bothered to practise paradiddles, flams and rolls for hour after lonely hour. Sitting in, aged 17, with a skiffle group at the Wimbledon Palais in a brief slot between Lou Prager sets was a bit of fun, not the start of something.

The homegrown DIY answer to American rock'n'roll, skiffle meant no more to Charlie than the original article. Fats Domino was the only rock'n'roller he had any time for, and he hated Elvis until Keith Richards educated him otherwise a few years later. Skiffle, however, was morphing into something else. Many young British fans were following up the skiffle staple Leadbelly to explore, via pricey American imports bought on mail order or in specialist Soho shops, the seductive world of rhythm and blues, with hit rocker Chuck Berry the gateway to the Chess stable and then deeper still to the smaller labels, country blues, folk blues and so on. Around London a little scene was growing, and it began to make headway into clubs always eager to pull punters to the bar via the box office.

Convinced that he was no more than a second-rater compared to such British jazz drummers as Bobby Orr or Phil Seamen, Charlie was serious about art and design but merely enjoying himself playing Thelonious Monk tunes in a quartet. But he was good enough to attract the ear of one of the prime movers in London's blossoming R&B scene, Alexis Korner, who one evening in Earl's Court's legendary Troubadour offered him the stool with Blues Incorporated. Hitherto under the impression that rhythm and blues meant slowed-down Charlie Parker and that the harmonica meant Larry Adler and The Goon Show's Max Geldray, Watts had a lot to learn but far too low an opinion of himself as a jazzer to be snobbish about the offer. Besides, he couldn't help noticing that on the traditionally dead Thursday night at the Marquee club, Korner was pulling in a bigger crowd than British jazz star Johnny Dankworth on Sundays.

> **"Home to me is Stravinsky and Picasso, and out there is all this other crap, groupies and all that rubbish."**
> **CHARLIE WATTS**

SOON WATTS WAS GIVING THE swing not only to Blues Incorporated (whose floating membership included Brian Jones, styling himself Elmo Lewis, down from Cheltenham, and Mick Jagger and Keith Richards up from Dartford) but three more R&B outfits besides; however low down the drumming totem pole he felt, he was clearly more than good enough for these new kids on the London club block. Which is when this Blues Incorporated offshoot group calling themselves The Rollin' Stones started bidding for his services.

Watts's evening excursions were beginning to encroach on his day job. The ad agency management insisted that the confrontation-averse art director have a word with the young assistant slumped yet again at his drawing board after another late night keeping time. "Charlie," he said, or so the story goes, "you have to make a decision. You can either be a first-rate art director or a second-rate drummer."

How much Watts agonised over that choice will now never be known. But he

Guy Webster rpmarchives, Getty (3), Shutterstock

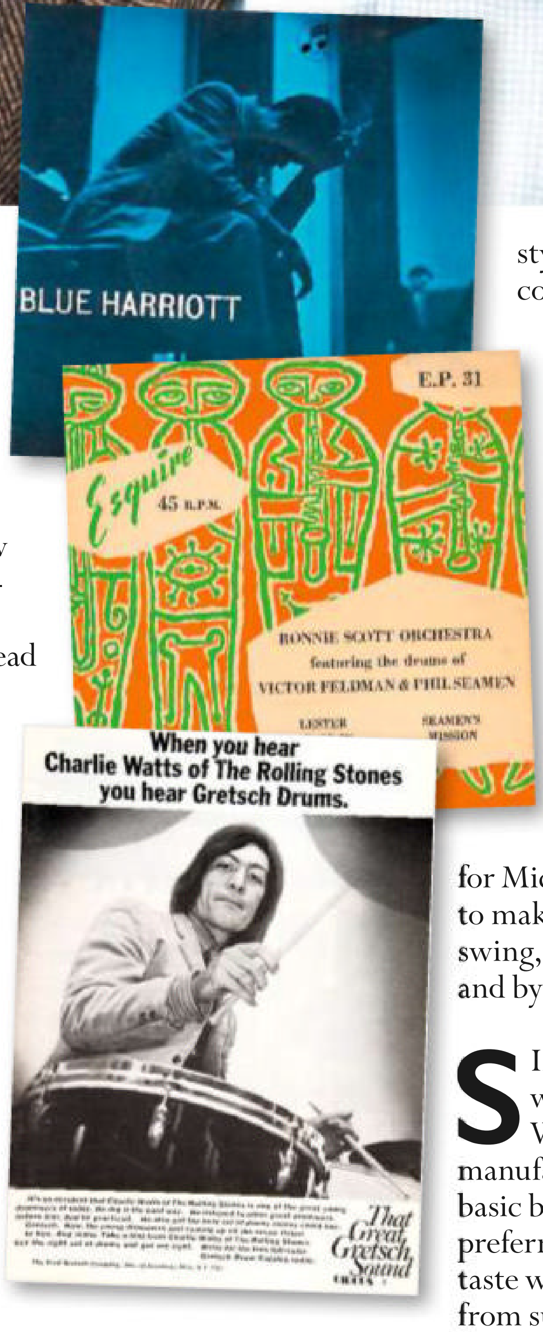
chucked in the salary to move into Jagger, Richards and Jones's Edith Grove hellhole to immerse himself in the music and get the hang of how to rock.

What perhaps none of these young guys then knew was that many of the drummers – like Fred Below, S.P. Leary and Tom Whitehead – on the R&B records they pored over were versatile pros who also played jazz. And that though, at first hearing, Jimmy Reed drummer Earl Phillips might appear to be merely bashing away, closer study revealed a master of subtle simplicity. Charlie was getting his templates.

Many reasons have been advanced over the years as to what it was that lifted The Rolling Stones out of a scene bursting with talent and enthusiasm to become household names as The Beatles' evil twin. One of them surely is this: they became one hell of a dance band. And the engine behind that irresistible danceability was Charlie.

The breakthrough hit came in summer '65. History records how Richards woke up with the catchy riff to (I Can't Get No) Satisfaction and at first imagined it arranged for horns as an album track in the Stax soul style until persuaded it could be colossal picked out on fuzz guitar. But the Stax vibe was not forgotten; house skinsman Al Jackson Jr was a titan of subtle simplicity, and drumming the song in that style cooked up the year's biggest floorfiller and defined the moment in Watts's musical development when everything fell into place.

It had the lot: space for Mick, Keith, Brian and Bill to make their presences felt, swing, effortless authority – and by God it rocked.



SIMPLICITY OF MEANS was key to Charlie Watts's style. Ideally manufactured by Gretsch in basic black with 1957 his preferred vintage (fastidious taste was a Watts hallmark from suits to shoes to dogs and even to thoroughbred horses and vintage cars, despite the fact he could neither ride nor drive), his kit of choice consisted only of four drums: bass, floor tom, mounted tom and snare. Focusing on the one and the three rather than the two and the four in a four-beat bar, he'd lead with his right foot on the bass drum to push the band forward, with his left hand smacking the snare just ➢

A RIGHTEOUS CHARLIE

"What Am I Going To Do In A Bloody Great Big House?"

Charlie Watts was all about simple and classic, as he told **Sylvie Simmons**.

THE SLENDER, SILVER-HAIRED man who answered MOJO's knock on his hotel-room door wore lounge-pyjamas, monogrammed slippers and an inscrutable look on his face. In a room as neat as its occupant, the one personal item on display was a zip-up case containing 150 of his favourite CDs: "Classical, jazz, mostly things I had on vinyl when I was 16. I'm not," Charlie Watts said, "what you imagine I'm like."

It was July 2002 and The Rolling Stones were in Toronto rehearsing for their 40 Licks tour. Each rented their own separate residence. Mick's looked like a wannabe Palace of Versailles. Charlie snorted. "What am I going to do in a bloody great big house? It's easier to live in a hotel. Mick would prefer to rent a house, but he travels with more people than I do. Mick can't move without five people moving with him, doing things. He's always been like that. I'm not like that. I don't travel with anyone and I don't want anyone. I would *hate* to have people around me", he shuddered. "Apart from my wife and daughter."

The prospect of the tour, Charlie said, "Fills me with horror. Always has. Because I don't like leaving home. But there's no other way. You can't be a drummer and live at home. You can play a piano at home, but you can't be a drummer. And I love playing drums."

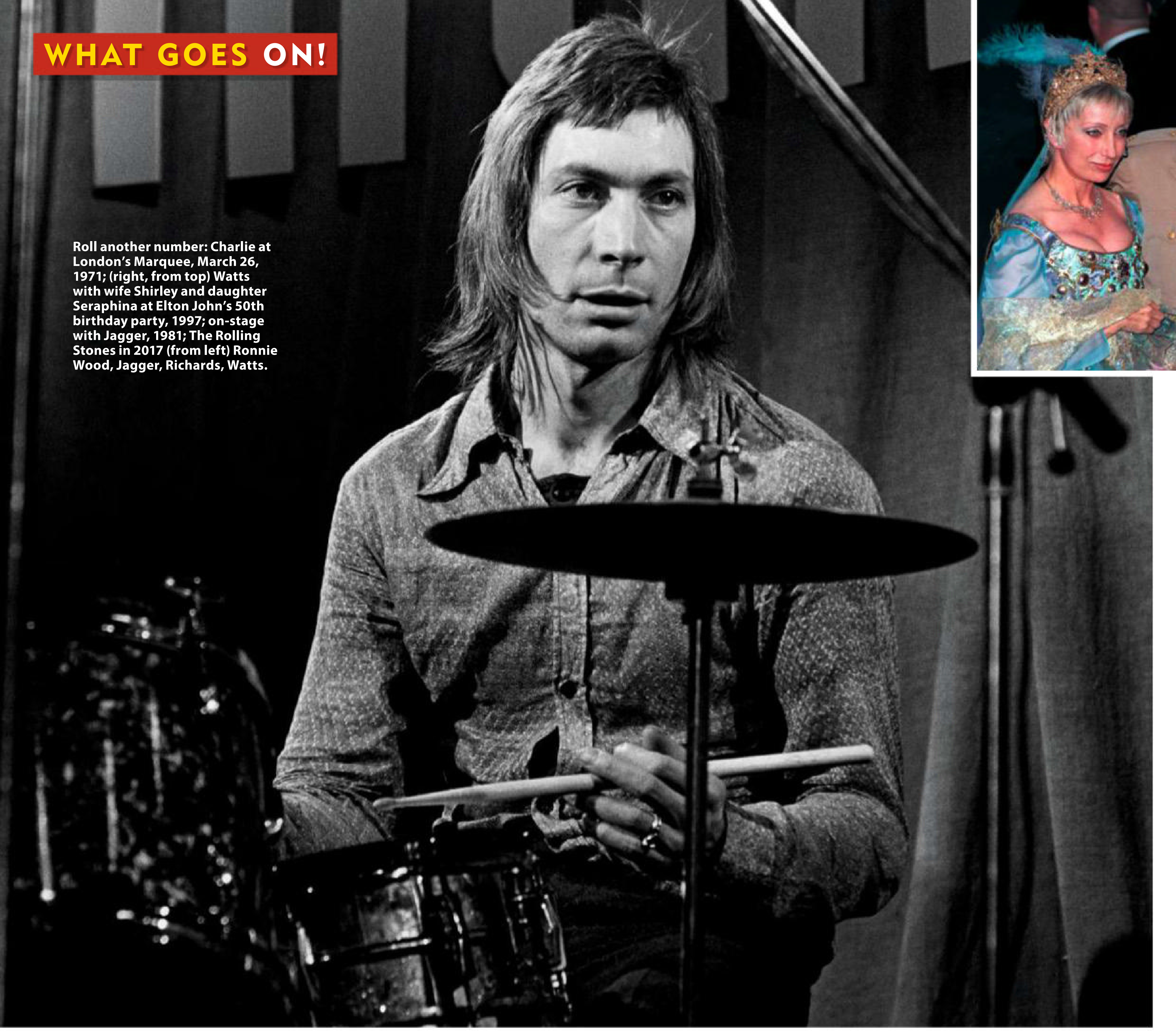
For an hour and a half we talked on a host of different subjects. Sometimes a question evoked a sharp one-liner. But surprisingly, given his distaste for talking about him himself – particularly to a journalist – he'd often answer in depth, at his most animated when talking about jazz.

"Since I was about 12, when I first heard jazz music properly, whenever I've played the drums I'm attempting to be playing with Charlie Parker or Muddy Waters. I still have the same childish enthusiasm and admiration for those people as I had then."

"Still the same." That kept coming up. Charlie was the steady heartbeat of the Stones. The one time that changed – his heroin period in his forties – he still couldn't explain. "Why? I honestly don't know, but it nearly killed me. It was so unlike me."

He talked about his bandmates with biting honesty, but also affection. The news of Mick's forthcoming knighthood did evoke a scoff, but he added, "If Paul McCartney got one, Mick should have got one. And Mick really enjoyed it so I'm very pleased for him. But if Mick got one, Keith should have got one. That," Charlie said with a wry smile, "would have *really* been something else."

Watts enjoying a champagne moment after one of his horses won a race in Poland, 2002.



Roll another number: Charlie at London's Marquee, March 26, 1971; (right, from top) Watts with wife Shirley and daughter Seraphina at Elton John's 50th birthday party, 1997; on-stage with Jagger, 1981; The Rolling Stones in 2017 (from left) Ronnie Wood, Jagger, Richards, Watts.

Getty (3), Camera Press, © Alec Byrne/rpmarchives

◄ behind the direct backbeat and, unusually, never simultaneously with the hi-hat completing the shuffle feel on the two and the four. After the eclipse of Brian Jones, Keith Richards led the band with Charlie following, flipping the common practice in rock of everyone following the drummer's lead. These fractional delays gave the Stones an elastic articulation that mimicked a dancer's movement.

His two-year growth phase over, Satisfaction was where Watts hit his stride. From then on, he bossed the Stones' groove with an authority that challenged Richards to keep up. But the musical chemistry between the two was growing, the synergy of tension and release, drive and relaxation, that made their music so human, so danceable. Unlike the increasingly head-and-heart Beatles, this was body music, music you felt first, moved to first – and only then thought about.

Watts was highly sensitive to Richards's vibrations: "Keith is the most interesting, the most different of us all," he would tell The Observer's Barbara Ellen in 2000. "He's a man of vision." And their relative contributions are there to see in Jean-Luc Godard's 1968 movie One Plus One, in part a fly-on-the-wall documentary of the Stones recording Sympathy For The Devil at Olympic Studios in Barnes. Intriguingly, for a while the song lacked a compelling groove despite Charlie trying everything. Jazz to the rescue. Just check out A Night In Tunisia on Dexter Gordon's 1963 album *Our Man In Paris*; though not the blueprint for Sympathy's samba, Kenny Clarke's drumming was its inspiration.

> **"I wouldn't want to play with anybody else but The Rolling Stones. I enjoy being with them and playing with them immensely."**
> **CHARLIE WATTS**

IF THE STONES PEAKED MUSICALLY between 1968 and 1972 on the foundation of the Charlie-Keith chemistry, the dapper drummer felt otherwise out of kilter with the times, and looked it too, the louche long hair and down-dressing exotica an uncomfortable fit. A devoted husband since the age of 23 to sculptress Shirley, he'd sooner sketch his hotel room on tour than fill it with groupies and groovers, and would even go to bed early while recording *Exile On Main St.* in Nellcôte on the Côte d'Azur.

As for festivals, Watts deplored how the wind would disturb his cymbals; and never mind Altamont, he even hated the legendary free Hyde Park 1969 comeback show.

"My wife got hit with a stale sandwich," he grumbled to The Guardian in 2013. "I remember her going mad with that. I don't blame her. I never liked the hippy thing to start with. It's not what I'd like to do for a weekend, I can tell you."

If the half-century since that Stones

golden era has embellished and refurbished the legacy rather than substantially adding to it, so it was for Duke Ellington and many other jazz inspirations who kept on keeping on. Watts loved the renewed band camaraderie stoked by the affable Ron Wood, and aside from working closely with Richards on the musical nuts and bolts behind the scenes, the art director *manqué* had a significant hand in their stage and product design. "We're the best thing on those huge stages," he told MOJO's Chris Ingham in 1996. "I've seen great bands shrink on 'em. We had some of the Seattle grunge lot on; nice little records, they were lost on a football field."

For all his insistence that despite his friendships with the band, the Stones were not what gave his life meaning but always just a job, he was perhaps more emotionally invested than he thought. At a time of particular band fractiousness in the mid-'80s, he shocked everyone, not least himself, by hitting the wine, speed and smack. With Shirley despairing, he pulled himself together just in time, and focused instead on jazz side projects, lavish labours of love repaying favourite musicians for all the pleasure and meaning they'd given his life.

But alongside the romance, always the pragmatism. Many British fans of a certain vintage will recall the Stones' disappointing run early in the boiling summer of '76 at the Earl's Court Arena with wayward sound compounding Keith Richards at his chemical nadir. At the end of the show as the lotus-leaf stage closed over his head, Charlie put down his sticks and walked away from his drum stool like a factory worker clocking off at the end of a shift.

Job done, the moment seemed to say; not a great day at the coalface but there will be better. And there were, stretching another 45 years, right up to the age of 80.

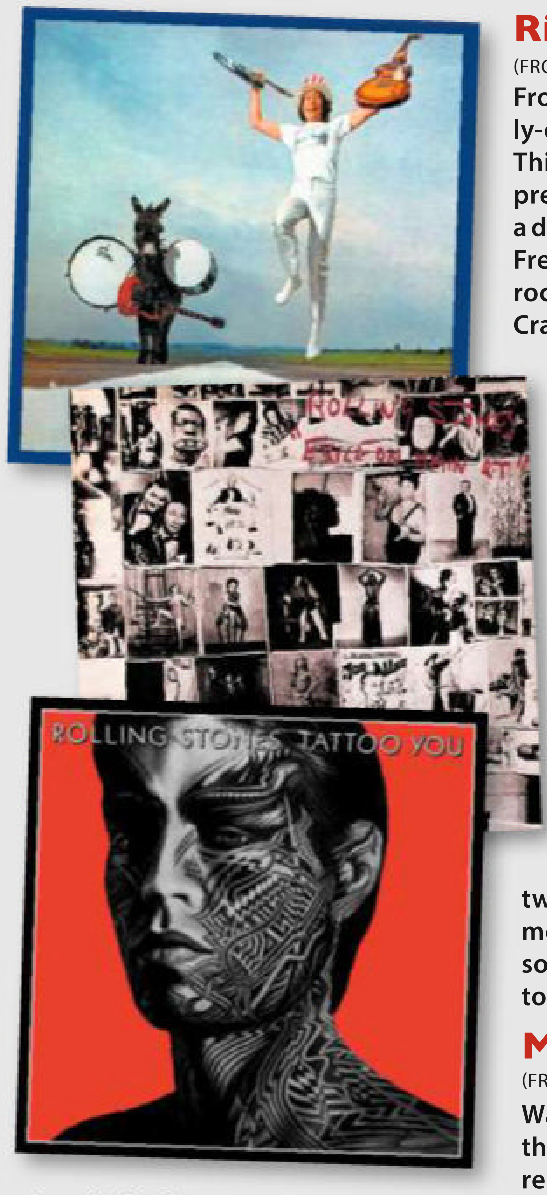
In 1994 the late Robert Sandall asked him why he kept doing it.

"Keith would say, 'What else are you going to do?'" he replied, before adding, "I probably enjoy it more now. I can see what I'm doing now, in a way. I'm more relaxed with it. And I would like to say that I wouldn't want to play with anybody else but The Rolling Stones. I enjoy being with them and playing with them immensely. Immensely. Always have done."

It was always more than just a job, and Charlie Watts was always more than just a drummer. A lot more.

Watts What

Ten times his beats beat them all, by Mark Blake.



Get Off Of My Cloud

(SINGLE, 1965)

Watts marshals the rest of the Stones with a machine-gun snare fill. It suggests a conductor rat-a-tat tapping his baton on the music stand to get an orchestra's attention. He's an immovable force for the remainder of the song, the authority behind Jagger's snotty command that we stop invading his space.

Paint It, Black

(SINGLE, 1966)

The original mono single showcases the power on the Stones' throne. Watts sounds like 10 bombs going off a split second apart in the intro. Galloping rolls and splashes drive this brilliantly bleak tale of mental anguish. Later live versions confirm that Charlie still played everyone else off the stage on this one.

Monkey Man

(FROM *LET IT BLEED*, 1969)

You know he's there, but he waits 20 seconds before his bass drum kicks the door in. Almost two minutes later, the song pulls back and Watts's booming floor tom punctuates the guitar fills and Jagger's vocal scatting, before heaving and pushing the whole thing over the finishing line.

Honky Tonk Women

(FROM *GET YER YA-YA'S OUT!*, 1970)

Jagger delivers his tribute – "Charlie's good tonight, innee" – before the Stones ease into their recent Number 1 hit at New York's Madison Square Garden. Watts swings like a human metronome. Lips pursed inscrutably, newly-cultivated hippy hair dangling over his forehead, as reassuringly tight as the rest of the band are loose.

Can't You Hear Me Knocking

(FROM *STICKY FINGERS*, 1971)

The encapsulation of Watts's unerring ability to combine heart and soul with robotic precision. Its freewheeling mid-section showcases Mick Taylor's guitar and hired guns Rocky Dijon on congas and saxophonist Bobby Keys, but it's Watts who grounds them all, swooping in at the denouement with a final controlled cymbal splash.

Rip This Joint

(FROM *EXILE ON MAIN ST.*, 1972)

From the Stones' mythologically-decadent early '70s, Rip This Joint flashes back to the previous decade. Recorded in a dank cellar at Keith Richards' French riviera mansion, Watts's rockabilly beat evokes their Crawdaddy Club days. He's beyond reliable here: a stoic presence amid the chaos of '70s Stones life.

Tumbling Dice

(FROM *EXILE ON MAIN ST.*, 1972)

Keith Richards was once asked if he thought Tumbling Dice was "too slow". Presumably 'Keef' pulled the fabled ratchet knife on his interviewer. In a rare moment of studio trickery, Watts overdubbed a second drum part on top of the original, giving the world two Charlies on the Stones' most exultant, soulful pop song. And it was *never* too slow.

Miss You

(FROM *SOME GIRLS*, 1978)

Watts once told MOJO that his wife, "my Shirley", reckoned Miss You and its parent long-player *Some Girls* was "one of our better ones". Watts's drumming always swung, but this foray into disco gave him the chance to shine: by just *being* Charlie, The Rolling Stones' greatest dancer.

Slave

(FROM *TATTOO YOU*, 1981)

The first sound heard is the drums, and Watts and Bill Wyman's pulse-like bass dominate this limber jam exhumed from the mid-'70s. Watts is the sun around which the rest of the Stones and their acolytes, including pianist Billy Preston, revolve. He throws in some fills around the 4:30-minute mark, but that's as fancy as it gets.

Cool Blues

(FROM CHARLIE WATTS QUINTET, *A TRIBUTE TO CHARLIE PARKER WITH STRINGS*, 1992)

"He blew from his heart," says narrator/vocalist Bernard Fowler on this live tribute to Watts's hero Charlie Parker. Fowler could easily have been talking about Watts and his playing, though. The star turn here is alto saxophonist Peter King, but as with the Stones, Watts's rhythm is the glue binding it all together.

Purple prosodist: Stevie Van Zandt, ready to welcome us into his soul kitchen.

STEVIE VAN ZANDT'S AUTOBIOG TALKS BRUCE, THREESOMES AND PLAYING TONY SOPRANO?

"I WANTED IT to read a bit like a detective novel; like you don't know where it's going next," declares Stevie Van Zandt of Unrequited Infatuations: A Memoir. "It's about all the insights I've picked up and the little bits of craft I can pass along," adds the bandana-clad E Street guitarist, chatting from his NYC home via Zoom. "If I can make the book useful then it becomes a valid artistic enterprise."

Clocking in at 371 pages, Van Zandt's illuminating, vivid and funny tome has been percolating for years. But it was only after making 2017 solo album *Soulfire* and 2019's Little Steven And The Disciples Of Soul LP *Summer Of Sorcery* that he felt ready to commit. "Those records and the touring of them reconnected me with my own life's work and gave me a kind of closure," he says. "Plus, I was waiting for Bruce's book to come out. He was the first person I sent my book to, actually, and he didn't ask me to change a thing."

From his temporary addiction to *ménages à trois* to his account of Frank Zappa rudely declining to be part of anti-apartheid protest song Sun City, Van Zandt's book is nothing if not candid. It also has its revelations, not least that, prior to casting him as consigliere Silvio Dante in The Sopranos, the drama's writer David Chase had Van Zandt down to play Tony Soprano. The book also reveals Van Zandt planned to open a restaurant with the late James Gandolfini, who famously *did* play Tony. "As you can imagine, me and Jimmy had the greatest Italian food on the Sopranos set," Van Zandt explains. "Maybe that was our inspiration."

Amid thoughts on Tchaikovsky's ballets, why the British Invasion bands put US sax players out of work, and the all-important identity Springsteen found circa *Darkness On The Edge Of Town*, Van Zandt's account of his own political awakening and landmark, mostly '80s-situated activism is another of his book's key threads. Does he feel politicised rock music has lost its bite?

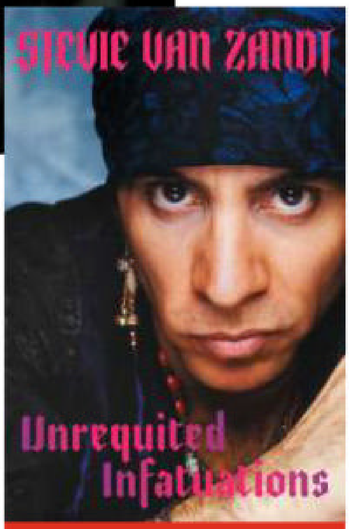
"I do. I think it's partly because the rock era is over and rock had different rules, different cultural and social aspirations. We're in a pop era now, and pop doesn't always have the same urgency. Plus, you have buffoons like Trump and Boris Johnson attempting to run the world, so people are off-balance and struggling and don't seem to have the willpower to organise themselves."

One thing Unrequited Infatuations makes clear is that Van Zandt likes a project. Next up, he says, "It'll be E Street or The Disciples Of Soul or more TV. And if not, I'll get myself a piña colada and a canoe and move to Hawaii.

"I really miss acting, and I'm looking at five completed scripts and 25 treatments. Then we'll see what Bruce wants to do next year, virus permitting. We made a wonderful new album [2020's *Letter To You*] just before the pandemic, and we'd dearly love to play that thing live."

James McNair

Stevie Van Zandt's Unrequited Infatuations: A Memoir is published by White Rabbit on September 28.



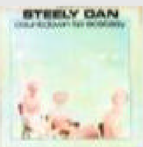
> **"I'll get myself a piña colada and move to Hawaii."**
> **STEVIE VAN ZANDT**

GIMME FIVE... TEETH-RELATED RELEASES

Lonnie Johnson & Victoria Spivey
Toothache Blues Pts I and 2
(OKEH, 1930)

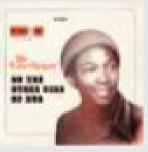
Over amused, strolling piano, 'Queen' Victoria laments her pain while Lonnie assures her he has the solution. Cue references to drilling, cavities, cocaine and liquor. Definitely not about sex.

Steely Dan
Your Gold Teeth
(ABC, 1973)



Gambling, getting your way and temptation are debated over typically virtuosic grooves, polish and abstrusity, with gold gnashers used to tell the future. For contrast, see the more reflective Your Gold Teeth II from 1975. Extraordinary guitar solos!

The Lone Ranger
Apprentice Dentist
(STUDIO ONE, 1977)

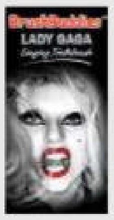


The reggae DJ loosely discusses a new job opportunity, with a sudden trip to the hospital emergency room. And big up Keith Hudson, who was known as the Ghetto Dentist for his 'street' practice – he once treated Big Youth's bad teeth.

The Mekons
Teeth
(VIRGIN, 1980)

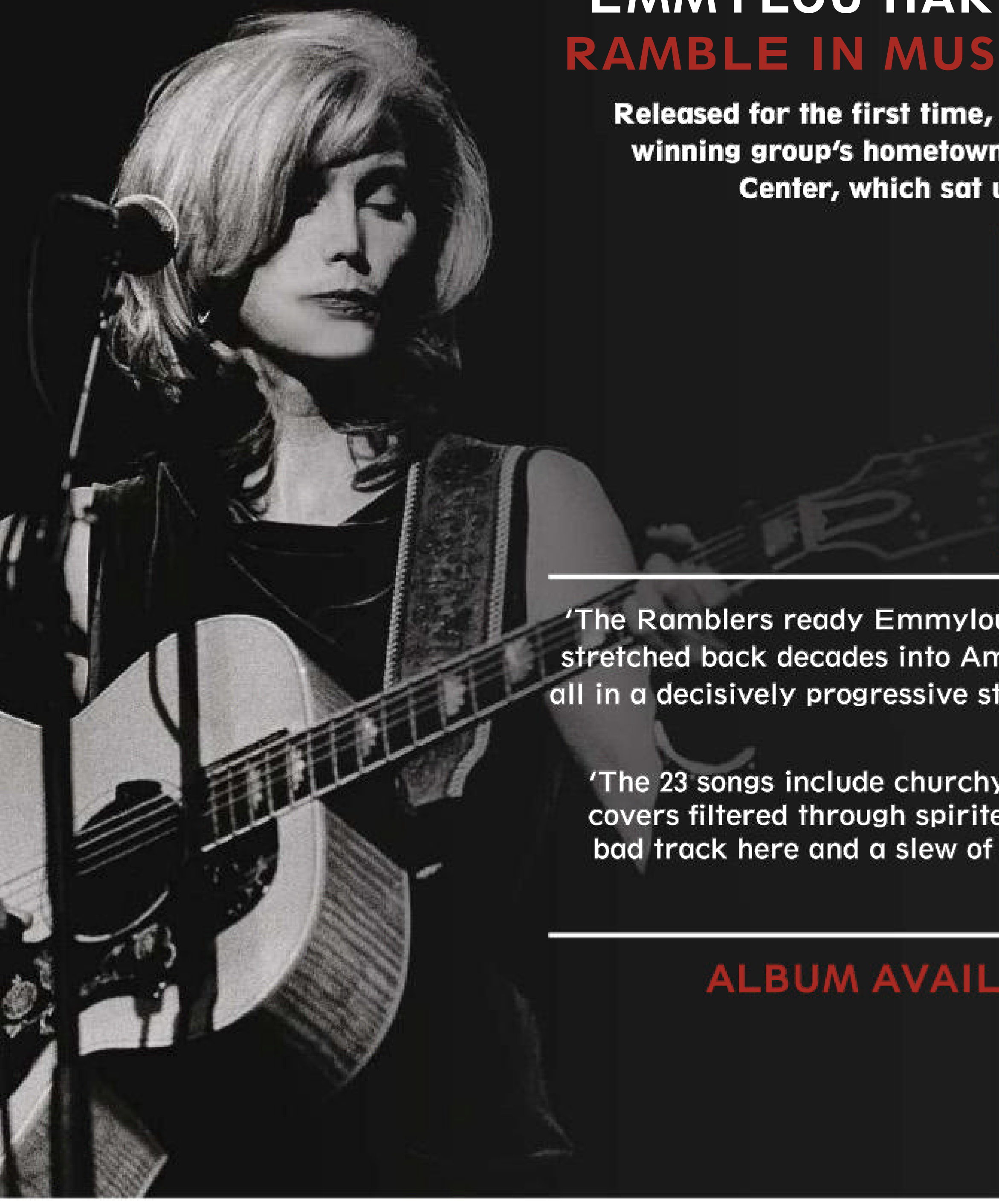
Synths and rock meet violins in a gloomy diagnosis of a still-pertinent malaise, with false teeth as the passport to happiness. See also The Mekons' two-volume *Hen's Teeth And Other Lost Fragments Of Unpopular Culture* odds'n'sods comps.

Lady Gaga
Born This Way
(BRAVADO, 2011)



More a format than a song, but anyway – this 'Brush Buddies' memory stick-cum-tooth-brush plays Gaga while you scrub your pearly whites, preferably after snacking on your dress made out of raw beef. Includes her song Teeth, of course.

Kirsti Hovde



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Steal yourselves: Big Thief (main, from left) Buck Meek, James Krivchenia, Adrianne Lenker, Max Oleartchik; (below from left) Meek and Krivchenia get inspired.

> “We could play country and not think about the rock songs.”
> **BUCK MEEK**

BIG THIEF TRUST THEMSELVES TO FIND THE MYSTERY ON ALBUM FIVE

FAR FROM letting Covid destabilise or divert them, Brooklyn-based indie quartet Big Thief quarantined for two weeks in July 2020 in a house in the Vermont woods, and then zigzagged across the US for four separate sessions. The 20-song result is the band’s first double LP, the most ambitious version yet of their spacious grunge-folk hybrid, including a foray into country on such songs as Spud Infinity and Red Moon.

“We accumulated so many songs that we loved, maybe about 50,” reports singer and main songwriter Adrianne Lenker, on a break during rehearsals for their autumn US tour. “Twenty could be whittled down to 12, but not 50.”

They considered releasing two records in one year – as the did in 2019 with *U.F.O.F.* and *Two Hands*, which were followed by 2020 solo albums from Lenker, guitarist Buck Meek and drummer James Krivchenia. Eventually, says Meek, they settled on, “focusing on different chunks of songs… that were stylistically, or thematically, connected. Like, we could just play country music for two weeks and not think about the rock songs.”

Lenker divides up the sessions in more abstract categories: “bombastic and wild, and hi-fi”, “raw and no fat, just songs, and acoustic,” and, “more serene, internal and reflective.” Recording started in upstate New York at Sam Evian’s Flying Cloud studio. “It was a period of reconnecting with friends and just making music, like when we first started the band,” says bassist Max Oleartchik. Next was Jonathan Dixon’s Five Star studio in California’s Topanga Canyon, with engineer Shawn Everett, who Buck calls “a strange wizard”. Krivchenia, who also produced the new LP, recalls Everett, “had this huge box of contact microphones, made up of dilapidated stethoscopes, plastic fruit and headphones, which record by capturing vibrations rather than the passage of air. Blurred View, for example, was recorded exclusively that way.”

Third was Colorado’s Studio in The Clouds with British engineer Dom Monks, and finally the country-focused fortnight at Press On in Tucson, Arizona with engineer Scott McMicken and their friend Matt ‘Twain’ Davidson on pedal steel and fiddle. “There was also a train that ran past every 15 minutes,” says Krivchenia. “It became part of the recording.”

“It was such a collaboration,” says Lenker. “The artistry of each engineer was such an important part. They had different personalities and tools, and we wanted to see how each treated our songs.”

The new album’s lyrical vision remains Lenker’s alone, as she processes Covid-world as well as existential thoughts. “I’ve noticed that a lot of this record is more uplifting and hopeful,” she says. “Which is funny, given the times we’re in. And there’s more acceptance, of the self and of the whole paradigm we’re in. The mysteries of humanity and how it’s all unfolding. I’ll probably be writing about that until I die!”

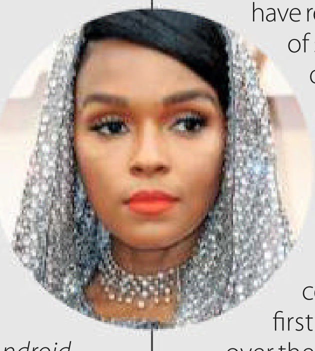
Positivity appears to run freely through this most vital and tight-knit of bands. “We’ve worked so hard to build trust between us over the years,” Lenker concludes. “This record was created on that bedrock.”

Martin Aston

FACT SHEET

Title: tbc
Date: early 2022
Production: James Krivchenia
Songs: Little Things, Blurred View, Promise Is A Pendulum, Spud Infinity
The Buzz: “It’s a new chapter of exploration and playfulness… this is us feeling freedom to just play, and be fuller versions of ourselves, and just let go.”
Adrianne Lenker

ALSO WORKING



…on signing a new Sony deal, **JANELLE MONÁE** (right) confirmed that she’s working on tracks with regular producers **Nate Wonder** and **Chuck Lightning**. The latter is also co-founder of Wondaland Pictures, who are developing a sci-fi movie based on Monáe’s 2010 LP *The ArchAndroid* …**Steve Diggle** is recording a new **BUZZCOCKS** LP …**Adam Clayton** told the Rockonteurs podcast that **U2** have recorded “acoustic versions of some of our catalogue in different keys, at different tempos as a challenge” …the reformed **FOLK IMPLOSION** are jamming new songs. Said guitarist/drummer **John Davis**, “it was very cool to hear **Lou** [**Barlow**]’s first new vocal melody come over the wire” …**ZZ TOP** plan to finish an LP they were recording with late bassist **Dusty Hill**. “We’ve got a couple of things [featuring Hill on vocals] that’ll make sense,” guitarist/singer **Billy Gibbons** told Variety …a new **SOFT CELL** album, *Happiness Not Included*, arrives in February 2022. Songs include Heart Like Chernobyl and I’m Not A Friend Of God …**NEIL YOUNG** (right) has shared news of the new **Crazy Horse** LP: “The Horse is definitely kickin’,” he wrote, “the music lives… the moon is full.” The nine new songs include Welcome Back and Song Of The Seasons …**BRIAN WILSON**’s *At My Piano*, featuring voice-and-keys treatments of songs from the catalogue, arrives in November… in August **MICHAEL STIPE** told The New Yorker, “I’m quantising a lot of music, because I’m composing myself, and I’m very, very limited as a musician…”

Buck Meek, Robbie Jeffers, Getty (2)

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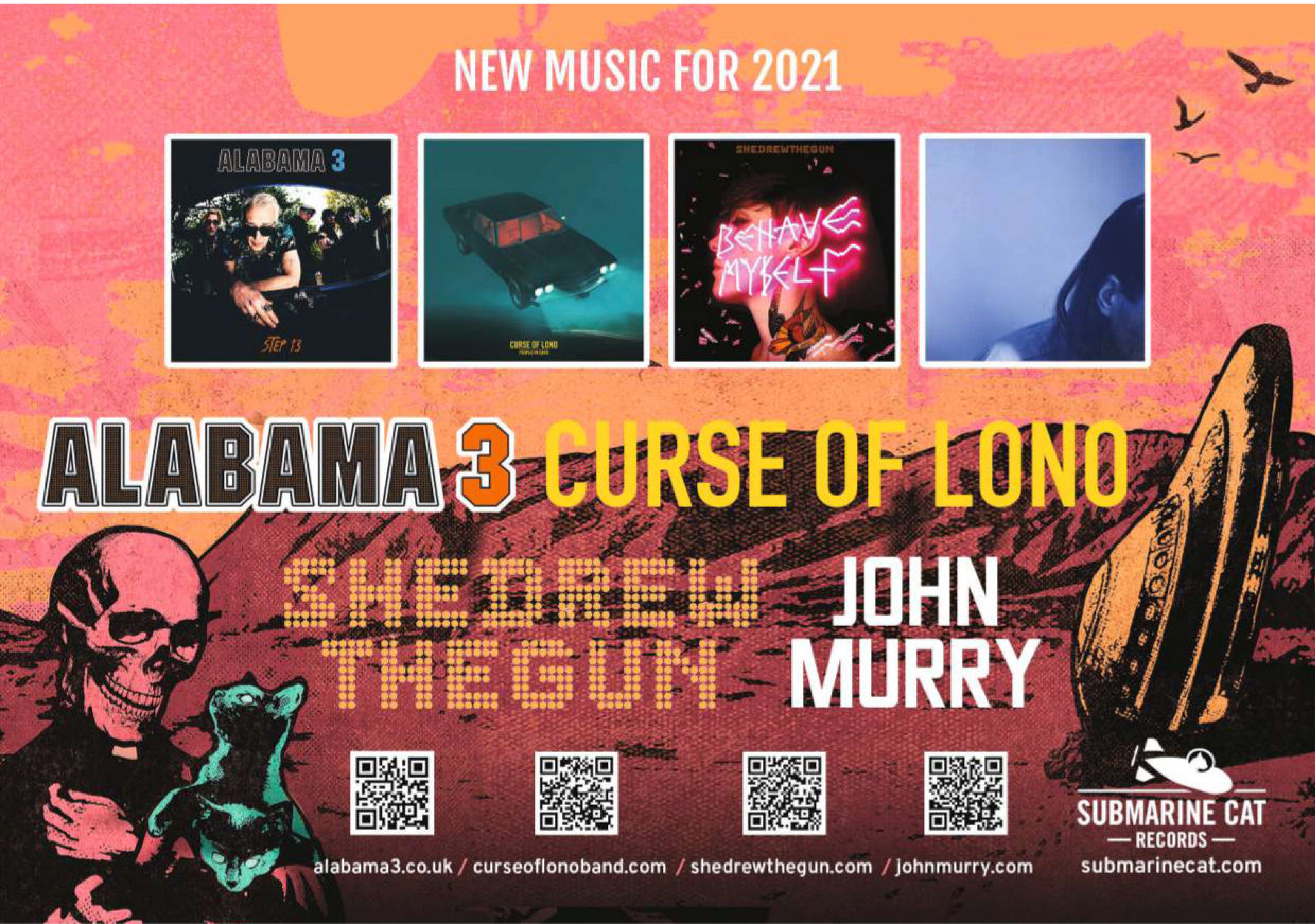
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"Most musicians are outsiders, I think": Roger Taylor, in an autumnal mood.

Lola Leng Taylor

ROGER TAYLOR

Queen drummer talks downfall-by-humour, John Deacon's lacuna and bald dwarf/cocaine rumours.

QUEEN STILL mean everything to Roger Taylor. That's why the Bohemian Rhapsody gong and the statue of Freddie Mercury that previously stood outside London's Dominion Theatre are on display in his garden in Surrey. But when the Queen + Adam Lambert Rhapsody European Tour was postponed until 2022, Taylor hatched *Outsider*, a "mature, late-career statement", and his first solo long-player in eight years.

Meanwhile, Queen's 40th anniversary re-release of *Greatest Hits* hovers around the UK Number 1 spot and 2018's Bohemian Rhapsody has become the highest-grossing musical biopic ever.

"Our ongoing success is a constant source of amazement and delight," says Taylor down the line from his yacht, cruising in parts unknown.

You've described your new solo album as "autumnal and bittersweet".

Yes, do you think I've grown up at last? (*laughs*). Sadly, I'm in the autumn of my years, and although I've done fun stuff like my version of [Shirley Ellis hit] The Clapping Song, the album reflects that. But I'd like to think people will be surprised – and in a good way.

Protest song Gangsters Are Running This World is self-explanatory, but many of these lyrics are more personal, you putting your house in order…

The older you get the quicker the years go, so I'm trying to squeeze in as much as I can. When I wrote Journey's End I actually thought, 'This might be the last song I ever write,' but obviously I lived to scribble again.

Is the album title *Outsider* particularly significant?

I've always felt slightly excluded, not much of a team-player. At school, I wasn't interested in the photographic society or playing bloody cricket. All I wanted to do was be in a band. Most musicians are outsiders, I think.

BOOM, TISH!

Roger's fave drum tracks

1 **Led Zeppelin** *In My Time Of Dying* (ATLANTIC, 1975)

2 **The Jimi Hendrix Experience** *Manic Depression* (TRACK, 1967)

3 **The Who** *My Generation* (BRUNSWICK, 1965)

4 **Foo Fighters** *All My Life* (ROSWELL, 2002)

5 **The Darkness** *Rack Of Glam* (COOKING VINYL, 2017)

Any update on the new Queen song you reportedly started with Adam Lambert?

Well, Brian suddenly lost interest and I don't really know why. We started it in Nashville when we were all quite tired. We couldn't decide on a title and the lyric felt a little too negative for Queen, maybe. But it was pretty damn good, and I hope it comes to light.

Will you, Brian and John Deacon ever sit down for a drink again?

It's a lovely fairy tale, but to be honest I don't think so. John's like a hermit, really. I don't think he's quite equipped for that – he's really fragile. He can't deal with company or the outside world, so far as I know. I guess he just sits there counting his money.

Have you given your son Rufus [drummer with The Darkness] advice about the biz?

I told him to write songs, not just play drums, because he's a natural on piano. On drums he's scarily powerful. I absolutely love The Darkness, but their over-developed sense of humour might be their downfall (*laughs*).

You were once asked to form a band with Mick Ronson and Ian Hunter…

It was around 1974, I think, after Queen toured with Mott The Hoople. I love Ian – what an attitude. I loved Mick, too, obviously. We had dinner in Wembley and they wanted to form Hunter-Ronson-Taylor, which had a ring to it. My loyalty to Queen meant it was out of the question, but I was very flattered.

What is the most persistent Queen myth?

Probably the one about the bald dwarves and the cocaine. It never happened. We had so many brickbats thrown at us, but nobody ever said that we couldn't play. If they did, we'd soon prove them wrong.

A sequel to the Bohemian Rhapsody biopic has been mooted…

My feeling is that one biopic's probably enough. But I'd be daft to rule it out. If someone can come up with a wonderful script that has a glimmer of truth about it, we'll see. But in a way we're our own hard act to follow, and we don't want to risk doing anything that isn't going to be great. Maybe that's one of the things that keeps us out of the studio these days.

> "One biopic's probably enough."
> **ROGER TAYLOR**

Tell us something you've never told an interviewer before.

I'll never write my autobiography. If it was full of truths, I think it would be to my detriment (*laughs*). The truth isn't always that interesting, anyway…

As told to James McNair

Roger Taylor's Outsider (EMI) is out on October 1.

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September 2021
21 Sheffield - *City Hall*
22 Newcastle - *O₂ City Hall*

October 2021
11 Hamilton - *Townhouse*
12 Aberdeen - *Music Hall*
13 Inverness - *Ironworks*
14 Perth - *Concert Hall*
15 Dunoon - *Queens Hall*
16 Oban - *Corran Halls*
18 Birmingham - *Symphony Hall*
19 Southampton - *Guildhall*
20 London - *Palladium*

December 2021
19 SOLD OUT - *Barrowland**
20 SOLD OUT - *Barrowland*
21 Glasgow - *Barrowland*

(*Free NHS Show - Rescheduled Date)

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SJM Concerts & Regular Music by arrangement with X-Ray

New Album
Fatal Mistakes
Out Now

BILLY BRAGG
UK & IRELAND TOUR 2021

OCTOBER

21	THU	GATESHEAD	SAGE GATESHEAD
22	FRI	DUNDEE	FAT SAM'S
23	SAT	GLASGOW	BARROWLAND BALLROOM
26	TUE	LIVERPOOL	PHILHARMONIC HALL
27	WED	OXFORD	NEW THEATRE
28	THU	BIRMINGHAM	SYMPHONY HALL
30	SAT	CARDIFF	ST DAVID'S HALL
31	SUN	SOUTHAMPTON	O₂ GUILDHALL

NOVEMBER

02	TUE	BELFAST	ULSTER HALL
04	THU	DUBLIN	VICAR STREET
06	SAT	GALWAY	BLACK BOX
10	WED	READING	HEXAGON
11	THU	EXETER	UNIVERSITY GREAT HALL
12	FRI	BRISTOL	O₂ ACADEMY
16	TUE	GUILDFORD	G LIVE
18	THU	CAMBRIDGE	CORN EXCHANGE
19	FRI	NOTTINGHAM	ROCK CITY
20	SAT	MANCHESTER	ALBERT HALL
21	SUN	SHEFFIELD	CITY HALL
23	TUE	BRIGHTON	DOME
25	THU	SOUTHEND	CLIFFS PAVILION
26	FRI	FOLKESTONE	LEAS CLIFF HALL
27	SOLD OUT	LONDON	ROUNDHOUSE

NEW ALBUM 'THE MILLION THINGS THAT NEVER HAPPENED'
RELEASED 8TH OCTOBER

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AN SJM CONCERTS AND FRIENDS PRESENTATION BY ARRANGEMENT WITH PARADIGM

GARY NUMAN
THE INTRUDER
UK TOUR 2022

WITH GUEST: DIVINE SHADE

///

APRIL	THU	28	CARDIFF UNIVERSITY GREAT HALL
	SAT	30	BRISTOL O2 ACADEMY
MAY	SUN	01	BRIGHTON CENTRE
	MON	02	BIRMINGHAM O2 INSTITUTE
	EXTRA DATE ADDED DUE TO DEMAND TUE	03	LIVERPOOL O2 ACADEMY
	THU	05	BOURNEMOUTH O2 ACADEMY
	FRI	06	PLYMOUTH PAVILIONS
	MON	09	EDINBURGH O2 ACADEMY
	TUE	10	GLASGOW O2 ACADEMY
	WED	11	NEWCASTLE O2 CITY HALL
	THU	12	LEEDS O2 ACADEMY
	SAT	14	NORTHAMPTON DERNGATE
	SUN	15	NORWICH UEA
	MON	16	NOTTINGHAM ROCK CITY
	WED	18	MANCHESTER ALBERT HALL
	EXTRA DATE ADDED DUE TO DEMAND THU	19	LEICESTER O2 ACADEMY
	FRI	20	SHEFFIELD O2 ACADEMY

SATURDAY 07 MAY 2022
LONDON
THE SSE ARENA WEMBLEY

///

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AN SJM CONCERTS PRESENTATION BY ARRANGEMENT WITH PARADIGM

NEWTON FAULKNER
THE INTERFERENCE (OF LIGHT) TOUR

PLUS GUESTS SAM BROOKES & Nati Dreddd

OCTOBER 2021
MON 11
GLASGOW GALVANIZERS SWG3
TUE 12
EDINBURGH LIQUID ROOM
SAT 16
NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY
MON 18
HULL ASYLUM
TUE 19
SHEFFIELD LEADMILL
WED 20
MANCHESTER O2 RITZ
FRI 22
LIVERPOOL O2 ACADEMY
SAT 23
CARDIFF TRAMSHED
MON 25
BIRMINGHAM O2 INSTITUTE
TUE 26
LONDON
O2 SHEPHERDS BUSH EMPIRE
THU 28
NORWICH UEA
FRI 29
OXFORD O2 ACADEMY
SUN 31
TORQUAY THE FOUNDRY

NOVEMBER 2021
TUE 02
DUBLIN THE ACADEMY

CHANGE OF DATE AND VENUE
WED 03
BRISTOL MARBLE FACTORY
ALL TICKETS REMAIN VALID

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AN SJM, METROPOLIS MUSIC, DF, VMS, MCD & THINK ORCHARD PRESENTATION IN ASSOCIATION WITH CAA

JOHNNY MARR CHANNELS "WOOZY PERCEPTION" AS HE PREPS NEW DOUBLE LP AND TEASES *STRANGEWAYS* BOX SET

FOR THE past 18 months, Johnny Marr has been working seven days a week in his Crazy Face Factory studio, housed on the sixth floor of a one-time cotton mill on the outskirts of Manchester. The normally buzzy industrial units surrounding him had fallen silent, with the only sounds in the building coming from his recording rooms. "It was like a ghost town," he tells MOJO. "I actually started writing the first few songs before the pandemic. I just had some ideas that I'd been percolating, and I wanted to get cracking at it. There's been no let-up at all."

The result is his upcoming fourth solo long-player, *Fever Dreams Pts. 1-4*: notably a double. "I've been in lot of groups," he says, "and I've never done a double album, which surprised me, really."

Marr says he worked even harder in the studio this time around than he did during the intensive sessions for 2018's *Call The Comet*, putting in long days that often bled into the small hours. "If anything, I think this record's maybe wrung me out a little bit more," he laughs. "The writing's kind of pulled me all over the place, musically, melodically and sonically. My idea for it was really quite expansive."

His plan is to initially release most of the new songs via a series of three EPs – the first, Fever Dreams Pt.1, is due in October and opens with Spirit, Power And Soul, an electro rouser driven by an amped-up vintage Oberheim DMX drum machine (as previously heard on everything from Herbie Hancock's Rockit to New Order's Blue Monday).

"We've invited the machines in," Marr says, "but we're kicking them around a little bit."

The album's title, meanwhile, he says represents to him "a certain kind of woozy perception". If many of the lyrics on his previous albums reflected Marr's interest in urban psychogeography, this time he's more concerned with inward-looking mental states. Musically, the first EP's tracks are punchy and uplifting, though often deal with people moving through heavy weather. The beleaguered narrator of All These Days, for instance, he admits is, "very close to what I am, and I'm hoping that people can relate to it."

Elsewhere, Ariel borrows its title from Sylvia Plath's 1965 poetry collection and imagines a troubled character "who could be either someone like Sylvia Plath or someone like Syd Barrett." Other future tracks to follow on the album proper include the "quite heavy and dramatic" The Speed Of Love and anti-segregated society "call to arms" Lightning People (both featuring Primal Scream bassist Simone Marie).

Meanwhile, Marr confirms rumours of a *Strangeways, Here We Come* box set are not unfounded.

"Yeah, there has been some talk about a *Strangeways* box," he says. "Particularly on that last album, what we were after sonically meant that the [work-in-progress] monitor mixes were a really good listen. They didn't need a lot of bells and whistles. The rough mixes and demos from that period hold up really well. So, yeah, it'd be nice to see them all lovingly curated some-where or other."

Tom Doyle

Fever Dreams Pt.1 is released via BMG on October 15.

JOHNNY MARR
FEVER DREAMS PT 1

"The writing's pulled me all over the place."
JOHNNY MARR

Inviting the machines in: Johnny Marr, feverishly dreaming.

LAST NIGHT A RECORD CHANGED MY LIFE

The Bug

Bass demolition man **Kevin Martin** hails the Sex Pistols' *Never Mind The Bollocks…*

I must have been 10, 11 at secondary school in Weymouth. Me and my best friend, a guy called Geoff Cotterill, the first punk in our school, were in the corner of the assembly hall, avoiding everyone at dinner. He wanted to play me *Never Mind The Bollocks* on this little cassette recorder, because he knew it was shocking. I'd heard of the Sex Pistols – punks being the end of civilisation. It felt dangerous before he even pressed play.

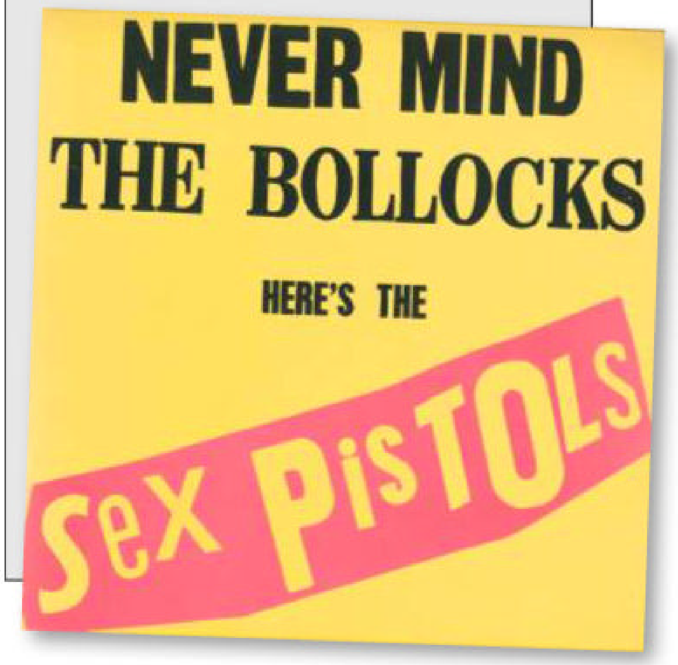
We were just, like, stunned, laughing our heads off, completely psychologically impacted and gobsmacked by this *onslaught*. There are amazing hooks all over it, and Bodies was just the ultimate shocker. At that time, Lydon was a total iconoclast and genius, to think he was writing lyrics like that at that age is a complete head fuck. Up until that point I'd only been listening to music my mum had bought me, like fucking 10cc or ELO. I was in a shit situation, in a family at war, not understanding the chaos of it all. The sheer fuck you/question everything/believe nothing attitude of the Pistols spoke to me. I already knew the world wasn't all a fucking lovey-dovey hippy world. The real world is punk as fuck.

I've never owned *Never Mind The Bollocks…* but I would never have been the person I am without it. It encapsulated, "Fuck this world, fuck society. I don't understand it and I don't want to, so let's just fucking blast out the chaos." It was a gateway to punk for me, to Discharge and Crass, and then post-punk, and PiL, which made me want to make music.

The last time I saw Geoff was in a pub in Weymouth. I was about 18, with a dreadlock mohawk – we got *such* shit from locals. He came up to me looking very straight and said, "Kev, what are you doing? That was just a phase," and looked at me like I was an alien. It was a bit sad, 'cos he was literally my hero.

As told to Ian Harrison

The Bug's Fire is out now on Ninja Tune.



Levelling the land

30th Anniversary Tour 2021

NOVEMBER 2021
22 SHEFFIELD SOLD OUT
23 FROME Che SOLD OUT ain
25 LANCASTER SOLD OUT Hall
DECEMBER 2021
08 MARGATE SOLD OUT nd
09 GUILDFORD SOLD OUT
11 YORK Barbican
14 NORWICH U SOLD OUT
15 SOUTHAMP SOLD OUT Guildhall
17 NOTTINGHA SOLD OUT City
18 NOTTINGHA SOLD OUT City

NEW DATES ADDED DUE TO DEMAND

OCTOBER 2021
30 NEWCASTLE O_2 City Hall
NOVEMBER 2021
24 PLYMOUTH Pavilions
26 MANCHESTER Academy
27 LONDON O_2 Academy Brixton
DECEMBER 2021
10 BIRMINGHAM O_2 Academy
12 GLASGOW Barrowland
16 CARDIFF Motorpoint Arena

MANIC STREET PREACHERS

LIVE 2021

PERFORMING SONGS FROM THE ULTRA VIVID LAMENT & ALL THEIR CLASSICS

PLUS THE ANCHORESS (EXCEPT LONDON)

SUN 26 SEP
NEWCASTLE O_2 CITY HALL
TUE 28 SEP
EDINBURGH USHER HALL
WED 29 SEP
DUNDEE CAIRD HALL
FRI 01 OCT SOLD OUT
STOKE VICTORIA HALL
SAT 02 OCT
MANCHESTER O_2 APOLLO

MON 04 OCT
YORK BARBICAN
TUE 05 OCT
GLASGOW BARROWLAND
THU 07 OCT
LEEDS O_2 ACADEMY
FRI 08 OCT
PORTSMOUTH GUILDHALL
SUN 10 OCT
BOURNEMOUTH O_2 ACADEMY

MON SOLD OUT T
CAMBRIDGE CORN EXCHANGE
WED SOLD OUT T
BATH FORUM
THU SOLD OUT T
BRIGHTON DOME

FRI 03 DEC
LONDON THE SSE ARENA, WEMBLEY
PLUS SPECIAL GUESTS TBA

NEW ALBUM **'THE ULTRA VIVID LAMENT'** OUT NOW

Supergrass
ash

PLUS VERY SPECIAL GUESTS

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O_2 ACADEMY BRIXTON LONDON

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ANGLO HANNAH MANAGEMENT AND SJM CONCERTS PRESENTS

Madness

The Ladykillers Tour

With Very Fragrant Guests

SQUEEZE

DECEMBER 2021
Thu 02 ABERDEEN P&J Arena
Fri 03 GLASGOW The SSE Hydro
Sat 04 SHEFFIELD Utilita Arena
SOLD OUT BOURNEMOUTH B.I.C
SOLD OUT BRIGHTON Centre
Thu 09 LIVERPOOL M&S Bank Arena
Fri 10 LEEDS First Direct Arena
Sat 11 MANCHESTER AO Arena
Mon 13 CARDIFF Motorpoint Arena
Tue 14 NOTTINGHAM Motorpoint Arena
Thu 16 NEWCASTLE Utilita Arena
Fri 17 BIRMINGHAM Utilita Arena
Sat 18 LONDON The O2 Arena
EXTRA DATE ADDED!
Mon 20 LONDON The SSE Arena, Wembley

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the stranglers
RUTS DC

THE FINAL FULL UK TOUR 2022

In Memory of Dave

PLUS SPECIAL GUESTS

RESCHEDULED DATES - ORIGINAL TICKETS REMAIN VALID

JANUARY 2022
Tue 25 **LINCOLN** Engine Shed
Thu 27 **ABERDEEN** Music Hall
Fri 28 **GLASGOW** O2 Academy
Sat 29 **GLASGOW** O2 Academy
Mon 31 **STOKE-ON-TRENT** Victoria Hall
FEBRUARY 2022
Tue 01 **NORWICH** UEA
SOLD OUT **GUILDFORD** G Live
Fri 04 **LONDON** O2 Academy Brixton
Sat 05 **LONDON** O2 Academy Brixton
Mon 07 **WARRINGTON** Parr Hall
Tue 08 **NOTTINGHAM** Rock City
Thu 10 **CARDIFF** University Great Hall
Fri 11 **MANCHESTER** O2 Apollo
Sat 12 **LEEDS** O2 Academy
Mon 14 **PORTSMOUTH** Guildhall
Tue 15 **SOUTHEND** Cliffs Pavilion
Thu 17 **BRIGHTON** Dome
Fri 18 **NEWCASTLE** O2 City Hall*
Sat 19 **BIRMINGHAM** O2 Academy
SOLD OUT **BRISTOL** O2 Academy
Tue 22 **READING** Hexagon
Thu 24 **SHEFFIELD** City Hall
Fri 25 **LEICESTER** De Montfort Hall
SOLD OUT **CAMBRIDGE** Corn Exchange

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NEW ALBUM 'DARK MATTERS' OUT NOW

PRESENTED BY SJM CONCERTS, DF, DHP, PVC, ORCHARD & VMS LIVE BY ARRANGEMENT WITH X-RAY TOURING AND CRUISIN' MUSIC

* Please note venue change

Legal matters: Shel Talmy with The Who's Keith Moon and Pete Townshend, IBC Studios, 1965; (inset) Shel today.

THERE'S UNFINISHED BUSINESS FOR LEGENDARY WHO/KINKS PRODUCER SHEL TALMY…

FOR PIONEERING independent producer Shel Talmy, being in the right place at the right time was an intuitive art. Only once did he feel his timing was off. "With David Bowie, we were five or six years ahead of where the market was," he says of the then Davy Jones, whose flop You've Got A Habit Of Leaving he produced in 1965. "He was brash, and I was brash too. He reminded me of myself!"

For '60s music lovers, Talmy hardly needs introduction. His early releases with The Kinks and The Who ripped up the pop production rule book, their explosive punk-before-punk sound – notably on You Really Got Me and My Generation – sending needles into the red. British rock music would never sound quite the same again. "I wasn't much older than those bands, so it was all an exciting adventure," says Shel. "We all wanted to push boundaries."

Born in Chicago in 1937, Talmy was a child prodigy who regularly appeared on the US TV gameshow Quiz Kids. After high school and college in Los Angeles, studying psychology, he trained as an engineer at LA's Conway Studios. In a jaw-dropping display of brass neck while on holiday in London in 1962, Talmy convinced Decca A&R head Dick Rowe that acetates given to him by LA producer Nick Venet were his own work. Not surprisingly, he was given a job.

Now 84 and based in LA, Talmy has taken to posting on Facebook the stories behind the myriad productions that followed, spanning everything from cult Mod stars The Creation, to The Easybeats' Friday On My Mind and Roy Harper's *Folkjokeopus;* dozens of obscure freakbeat and girl-groups also received his sizzling mid-'60s sonic treatment. Inevitably, perhaps, Talmy also details how The Who's manager Kit Lambert – "a total scumbag," says Shel – manoeuvred to replace him as the band's producer soon after 1965's debut *My Generation*. The resulting High Court battle was settled in Talmy's favour, with the producer receiving royalties from the group's next three albums. It was only in 2002 that Talmy granted The Who access to *My Generation*'s original master tapes. "I didn't want royalties," he says. "I just wanted to keep recording them."

Thankfully, Talmy's relationship with The Kinks lasted the full term before his contract ran out in summer 1967. "Ray [Davies] was very difficult sometimes," he says. "But as a commentator on English life in that period he was better than anybody else. (*Laughs*) People have noted, though, that when he took over as producer, they only had one more big hit, with Lola…"

Although his work-rate slowed dramatically in the '70s, when Talmy felt "labels weren't run by music people any more", he still steered several more intriguing sessions, such as the reunited Small Faces – "a disaster" – and The Damned's Stretcher Case Baby 7-inch. In 1979, after writing Whadda We Do Now, Butch?, a novel starring Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, a "bored" Talmy moved back to the US.

Today, after three decades of recording sporadically, Talmy is itching to get back in the studio. He already has "a couple of projects lined up" and wants "to maybe help people whose careers are flagging". The 'Talmy sound' may soon be back.

Pat Gilbert

IN A NUT SHELL

Talmy at the controls.

Various
Shel's Girls
(ACE, 2019)

One of four Ace compilations covering Talmy's lesser-known '60s work, *Shel's Girls* salutes the British girl-group scene. Marvel at the wonderful Grave Digger, credited here to 'Unknown Beat Girls'. See also *Making Time*, *Planet Mod* and *Planet Beat*.

The Creation
We Are Paintermen
(HIT-TON, 1967)

For Talmy, art-Mod magi The Creation are the '60s band that got away. "I'd made a deal for them with [Atlantic Records'] Ahmet Ertegun and he would have made them superstars," he says. "But they broke up."

The Kinks
Something Else By…
(PYE, 1967)

Together with The Who's *My Generation*, The Kinks' fifth album showcased Talmy's mastery at capturing a band on the longform format. Timeless album closer Waterloo Sunset arguably marks the producer's studio zenith.

> "David Bowie reminded me of myself!"
> **SHEL TALMY**

Colin Jones/TopFoto

THE OFFSPRING

LET THE BAD TIMES ROLL TOUR

PLUS SPECIAL GUESTS **THE HIVES** AND **BOB VYLAN**

Tue 23 Nov
CARDIFF
MOTORPOINT ARENA

Wed 24 Nov
BIRMINGHAM
RESORTS WORLD ARENA

Fri 26 Nov
LONDON
THE SSE ARENA WEMBLEY

Sat 27 Nov
GLASGOW
THE SSE HYDRO

Mon 29 Nov
MANCHESTER
AO ARENA

Tue 30 Nov
LEEDS
FIRST DIRECT ARENA

'THE NEW ALBUM LET THE BAD TIMES ROLL OUT NOW'

/OFFSPRING @OFFSPRING

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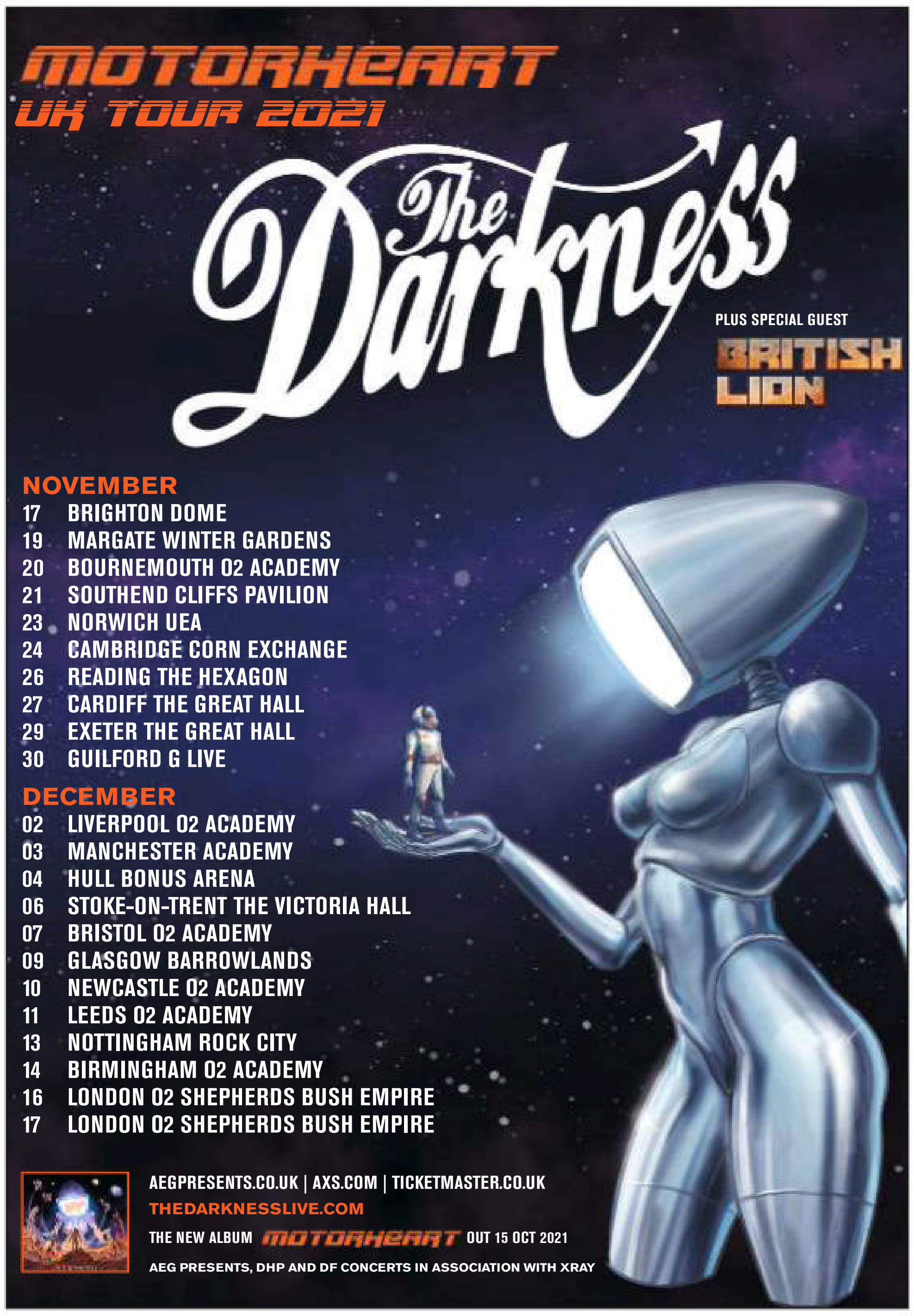
AEG PRESENTS IN ASSOCIATION WITH X RAY



MOTORHEART UK TOUR 2021

The Darkness

PLUS SPECIAL GUEST
BRITISH LION

NOVEMBER
17 BRIGHTON DOME
19 MARGATE WINTER GARDENS
20 BOURNEMOUTH O2 ACADEMY
21 SOUTHEND CLIFFS PAVILION
23 NORWICH UEA
24 CAMBRIDGE CORN EXCHANGE
26 READING THE HEXAGON
27 CARDIFF THE GREAT HALL
29 EXETER THE GREAT HALL
30 GUILFORD G LIVE

DECEMBER
02 LIVERPOOL O2 ACADEMY
03 MANCHESTER ACADEMY
04 HULL BONUS ARENA
06 STOKE-ON-TRENT THE VICTORIA HALL
07 BRISTOL O2 ACADEMY
09 GLASGOW BARROWLANDS
10 NEWCASTLE O2 ACADEMY
11 LEEDS O2 ACADEMY
13 NOTTINGHAM ROCK CITY
14 BIRMINGHAM O2 ACADEMY
16 LONDON O2 SHEPHERDS BUSH EMPIRE
17 LONDON O2 SHEPHERDS BUSH EMPIRE

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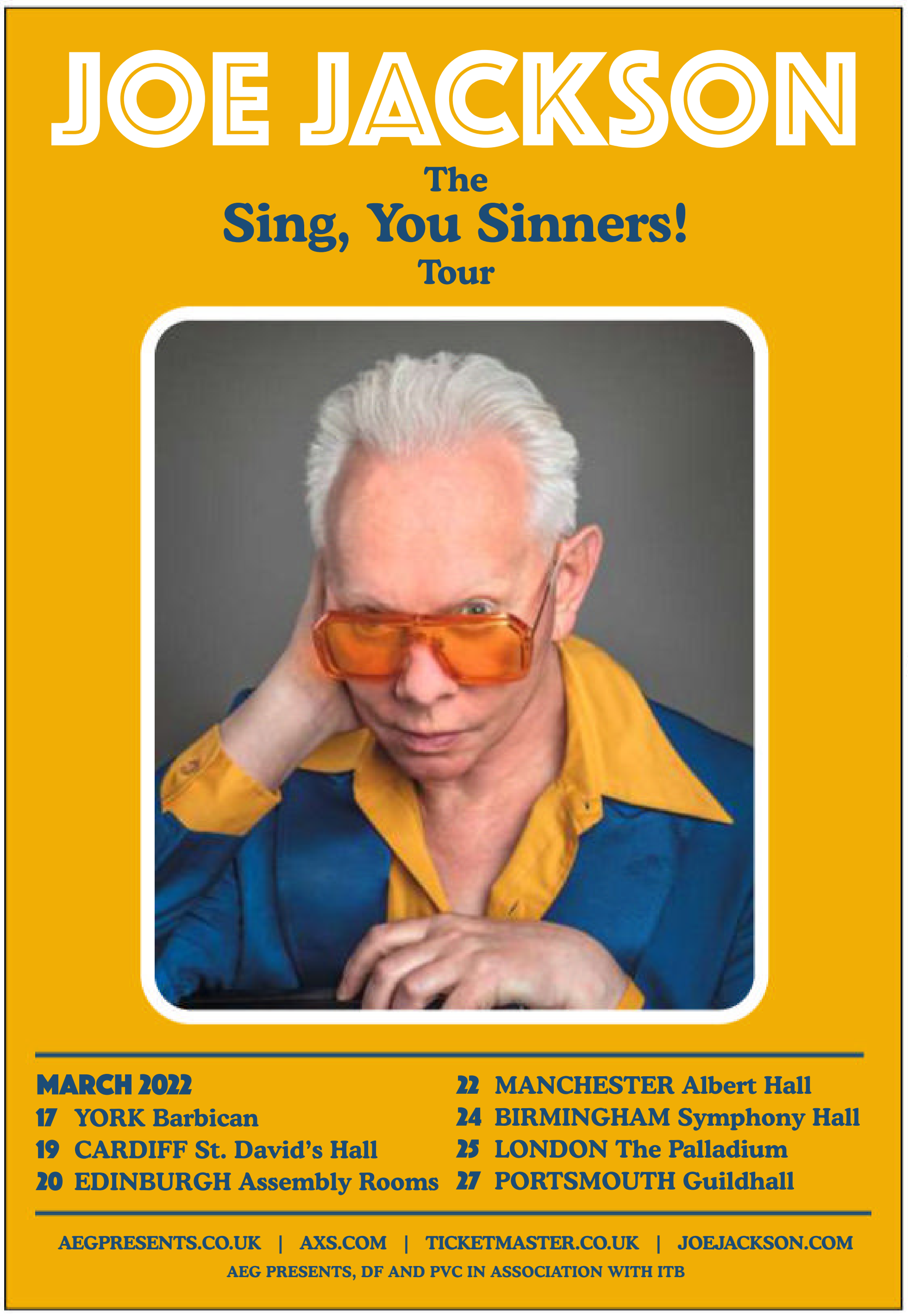
THE NEW ALBUM MOTORHEART OUT 15 OCT 2021
AEG PRESENTS, DHP AND DF CONCERTS IN ASSOCIATION WITH XRAY



JOE JACKSON

The
Sing, You Sinners!
Tour

MARCH 2022
17 YORK Barbican
19 CARDIFF St. David's Hall
20 EDINBURGH Assembly Rooms
22 MANCHESTER Albert Hall
24 BIRMINGHAM Symphony Hall
25 LONDON The Palladium
27 PORTSMOUTH Guildhall

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AEG PRESENTS, DF AND PVC IN ASSOCIATION WITH ITB

THE HIVES

UK TOUR 2021

PLUS SPECIAL GUESTS

1st December 2021
NOTTINGHAM ROCK CITY

2nd December 2021
PORTSMOUTH GUILDHALL

AEGPRESENTS.CO.UK | AXS.COM | TICKETMASTER.CO.UK
AEG PRESENTS AND DHP IN ASSOCIATION WITH UNITED TALENT AGENCY

GARBAGE

PLUS GUESTS
BISHI

WEDNESDAY 17 NOVEMBER
O2 ACADEMY BOURNEMOUTH

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GARBAGE.COM

“Hip-hop is what links us.”

CHESTER HANSEN, BADBADNOTGOOD

No limitations: (from left) BADBADNOTGOOD’s Alex Sowinski, Leland Whitty and Chester Hansen.

FACT SHEET

- For fans of Kamasi Washington, A Tribe Called Quest, Floating Points.
- BBNG have created original beats for Snoop Dogg, Thundercat, Mos Def and Danny Brown, and made a whole album with Wu-Tang Clan’s Ghostface Killah (2015’s *Sour Soul*).
- Drummer Alex Sowinski was so taken with the concept of late rapper MF DOOM he initially sported a pig mask on-stage.

KEY TRACKS

- Bastard/Lemonade
- Ray Gun
- Signal To The Noise

THE BADBADNOTGOOD LIFE: ECLECTIC JAZZ FOR HIP-HOP HEADS

“NONE OF THIS would have been possible without the internet,” says Chester Hansen. The bassist in Toronto trio BADBADNOTGOOD still seems shellshocked at how a group of friends at the Canadian city’s Humber College jazz programme went from playing interpolations of Odd Future as part of their course work (dismissed as “devoid of musical merit”) to briefly becoming the Los Angeles rap collective’s backing band, after a friend uploaded a clip to YouTube.

By the time they had knocked off 2011’s debut *BBNG* in under three hours – a covers-heavy affair that mashed up instrumental versions of Joy Division and Gang Starr tunes – they “realised we could do this full-time, which was just crazy”.

Five breakneck years of touring and recording at an old-fashioned album-per-year tempo followed, as BBNG built a formidable cult following by blending indie, electronica, classic rock and R&B into their beat-driven party.

Memories of touring put them in a reflective mood when they reconnected for new album *Talk Memory*, a return to pure instrumentals after 2016’s *IV*, packed as it was with guest vocalists.

“It was the most concise process we’ve ever had, even though it took so long,” says Hansen of *Talk Memory*’s two-year gestation.

“We wanted some thematic things recurring and used a more dialled-back instrument palette,” adds Leland Whitty, who joined Hansen and drummer Alex Sowinski in 2016, and whose frenetic guitar and sax work is a key presence on the new record. *Talk Memory* veers from jazz sprints to sprawling prog and nimble chamber symphonies, with dreamy string arrangements courtesy of Brazilian samba auteur Arthur Verocai.

It all prompts the question, though: what music do BADBADNOTGOOD actually make? Is it jazz? Hansen and Whitty are wary of easy pigeonholing.

“I don’t know if I would call us a jazz band,” says Hansen. “Hip-hop is what links us, although on this record we’ve gone deeper into our jazz roots.”

Whitty is similarly circumspect: “It’s more about using the jazz approach rather than what the genre is typically defined as.”

Either way, BBNG’s willingness to explore and blur boundaries is undimmed. “Apart from the ones we put on ourselves, we have no limitations,” Hansen concludes. “We don’t have to worry about fitting into a certain bracket, and we’ve somehow collected thousands of fans that support us no matter what direction we go.”

Andy Cowan

BADBADNOTGOOD’s Talk Memory is released by XL on October 8.

Jamal Burger

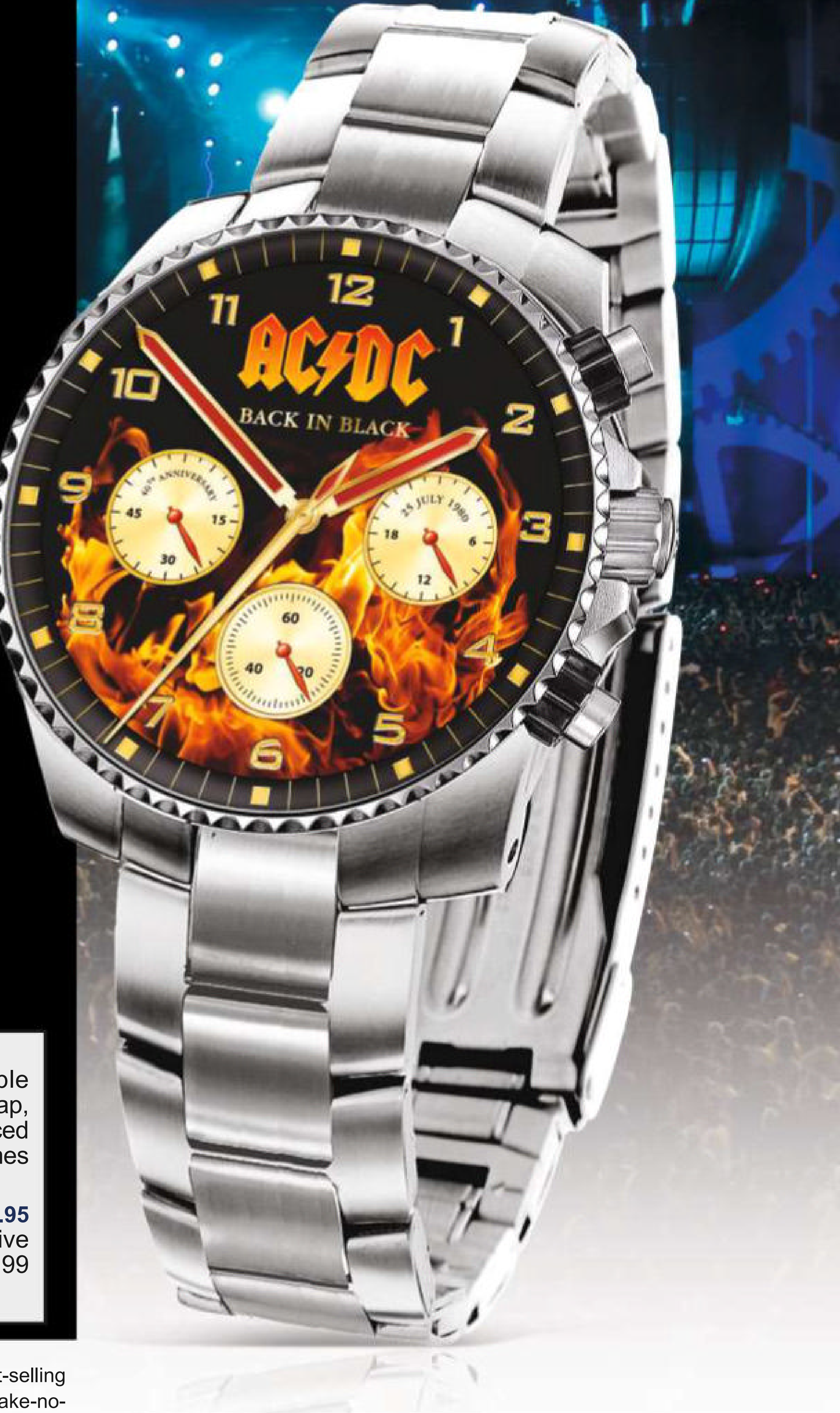
40TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

AC/DC

BACK IN BLACK

25TH JULY 1980

CHRONOGRAPH WATCH



40TH ANNIVERSARY
AC/DC
BACK IN BLACK
25 JULY 1980

REAR OF THE CASING:
Reverse etched with the official AC/DC logo and names of the band members

LIMITED EDITION:
Strictly limited to 9,999 and individually numbered on the reverse

25 JULY 1980

THREE CHRONOGRAPH DIALS:
Three precision chronograph dials feature stop-start function

KEY DETAILS

EVENT: The 40th anniversary of AC/DC's 'Back In Black' album.

OFFICIAL: Officially licensed.

LIMIT: Limited to just 9,999 individually numbered editions worldwide.

HIGH SPECIFICATION: Intended as a collectors' timepiece, this watch features three precision chronograph dials, durable stainless steel casing and strap, and a black watch face enhanced with the band's logo and the flames of hell fire.

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AC/DC released their Back in Black album in 1980 and it became one of Top 10 best-selling albums of all time. From the electrifying riffs, to the amp-shredding decibels and take-no-prisoners vocals, this was the LP that defined hard-edge metal. The 8th studio album by the band, it was released on 25th July 1980 and was the first to feature vocalist Brian Johnson. Celebrate the 40th anniversary of the top-selling 'Back In Black' album with an officially licensed tribute limited edition chronograph watch.

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FINDING NEW rooms in your house is a common dream, a symbol, perhaps, of new possibilities, emerging selves. For Meg Duffy, singer and guitarist behind Hand Habits, the dream of domestic discovery translated into the process of making their third album, *Fun House*. Duffy moved to a new place in Los Angeles last April as everything shut down: roommates Sasami Ashworth and Kyle Thomas became the literal in-house producer and engineer. "Sonically we were trying to take up a lot of space, spread out into this symbolic house. I was exploring different parts of my identity," says Duffy, who describes themself as trans non-binary and uses they/them pronouns, "and that fits really beautifully into the architecture of a home, exploring what every part of it looks like."

> "I was exploring different parts of my identity."
> MEG DUFFY

From this foundation, Duffy's vivid, fluid songs could embrace the past, the unreliable flicker of memory. "It was important to have these more harrowing themes and make them not seem like a funeral dirge," says Duffy. Of many startling images that flash out, the most striking is from Aquamarine's spectral country disco: "I didn't know she played guitar/Until I turned 27."

"My mother committed suicide when I was four and most of that record, I think, is for her," explains Duffy. The revelation came when a distant cousin sent a "memory box" – including earrings made from Duffy's aquamarine birthstone. "My cousin told me that my mother played guitar and I did not even know that. It changed the way I perceived myself. Like, so much of my artistic ability could have come from her."

Raised in Amsterdam, New York, at times Duffy lived with two uncles, one who played guitars, one who made them. Playing drums through high school, jamming to Led Zeppelin with "all the guys", Duffy turned to guitar at 16. "I never thought that I would write songs or sing. I just thought I would be a lead guitar player in someone else's band. Like a blues-rock bar band, because that's what I was exposed to." Instead, when their band Better Pills opened in Albany for Kevin Morby in 2015, a "psychedelic" sense of connection led to an invitation to join Morby's group. Later, Duffy's blossoming reputation would lead them to play and record with The War On Drugs, Weyes Blood and Perfume Genius.

Fun House, however, sees Duffy fully occupying their own space.

"These closed doors that I have," says Duffy, "I want to open them and explore deeper."

Victoria Segal

Hand Habits' Fun House is released by Saddle Creek on October 22.

FACT SHEET

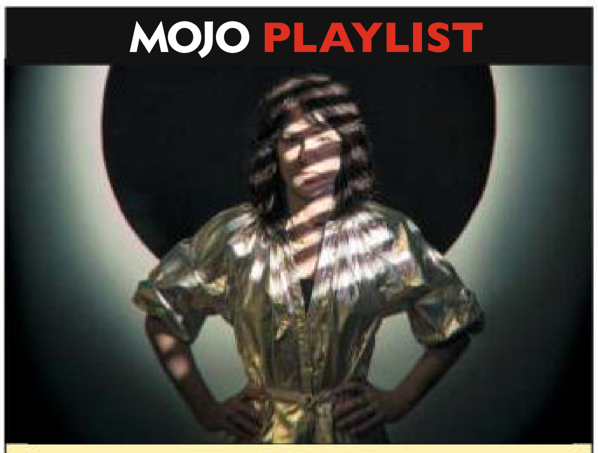
- For fans of: Angel Olsen, Kevin Morby, Eleanor Friedberger
- Duffy has also collaborated with Flock Of Dimes, Amber Arcades, Mega Bog and William Tyler.
- Hand Habits' first album, *Wildly Idle (Humble Before The Void)*, was released in 2017; it was followed by 2019's *Placeholder*.
- At college, Duffy studied guitar performance, including a lot of jazz. "I had never heard of Fleet Foxes until I had left college. I remember hearing Broken Social Scene and thinking, Whoa, this music is so cool, it does not make any sense to me."

KEY TRACKS

- Aquamarine
- Graves
- Placeholder

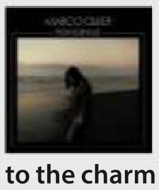
Hand Habits' Meg Duffy: finding new rooms in the *Fun House*.

MOJO PLAYLIST



Check in! For the month's best pop, jazz and Dust Bowl Ballads.

1 JOAN AS POLICE WOMAN/ TONY ALLEN/DAVE OKUMU
TAKE ME TO YOUR LEADER
An all-night improv with the late Allen gave Joan Wasser an LP, starting with this brilliant vision of Jacinda Ardern sorting the US out.
Find it: *streaming services*



2 MARGO CILKER
TEHACHAPI
Imagine Gillian Welch at The Band's sessions with Allen Toussaint, and you're close to the charm of this new Americana voice.
Find it: *Bandcamp*

3 ABBA DON'T SHUT ME DOWN
The second song from comeback album *Voyage*, this Dancing Queen-frosted groover of impossible return seems sung from the perspective of the new 'Abbatar' replicants.
Find it: *streaming services*

4 JON HOPKINS AND RAM DASS
SIT AROUND THE FIRE
From new LP *Music For Psychedelic Therapy*, Hopkins uses minimalist ambience and the voice of the spiritual teacher to demolish ego.
Find it: *streaming services*

5 NALA SINEPHRO SPACE 3
A Caribbean-Belgian harpist brings cosmic/electronic new dimensions to the London jazz scene. Amidst percolating ambience, Nubya Garcia also turns up, with sax.
Find it: *Bandcamp*

6 SWAMP DOGG
DUST BOWL REFUGEE
Jerry Williams Jr's remake of Woody Guthrie's migrant ballad adds strings and vocal swing. From Guthrie tribute *Home In This World*.
Find it: *streaming services*

7 SLOW DOWN MOLASSES
SOME FINE ACTION
Noise-rocking Saskatoon neo-shoegazers find corroded melodies in the wreckage of a rock anthem. From new LP *Minor Deaths*.
Find it: *Bandcamp*

8 YOUTH SPINNING WHEEL
Unashamed autumnal pop, like a splicing of The Circle Game and If I Were A Carpenter, from a member of Killing Joke? "There's more colours in my head," avers Youth.
Find it: *streaming services*

9 PAUL JOHNSON
MUSIC'S IN ME
The late Chicago house hero samples Sylvester's Mighty Real and Rare Pleasure's Let Me Down Easy into dancefloor nirvana.
Find it: *YouTube*

10 NIGHTMARES ON WAX
WONDER
From the *Shout Out! To Freedom* LP, George Evelyn plus Shabaka Hutchings and Haile Supreme dream-drift into the timeless ether.
Find it: *Bandcamp*

Jacob Boll

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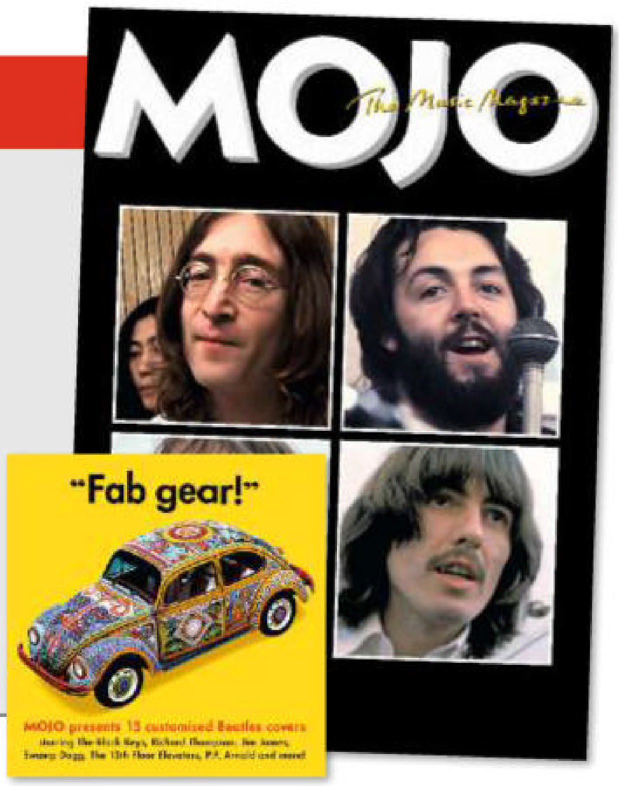
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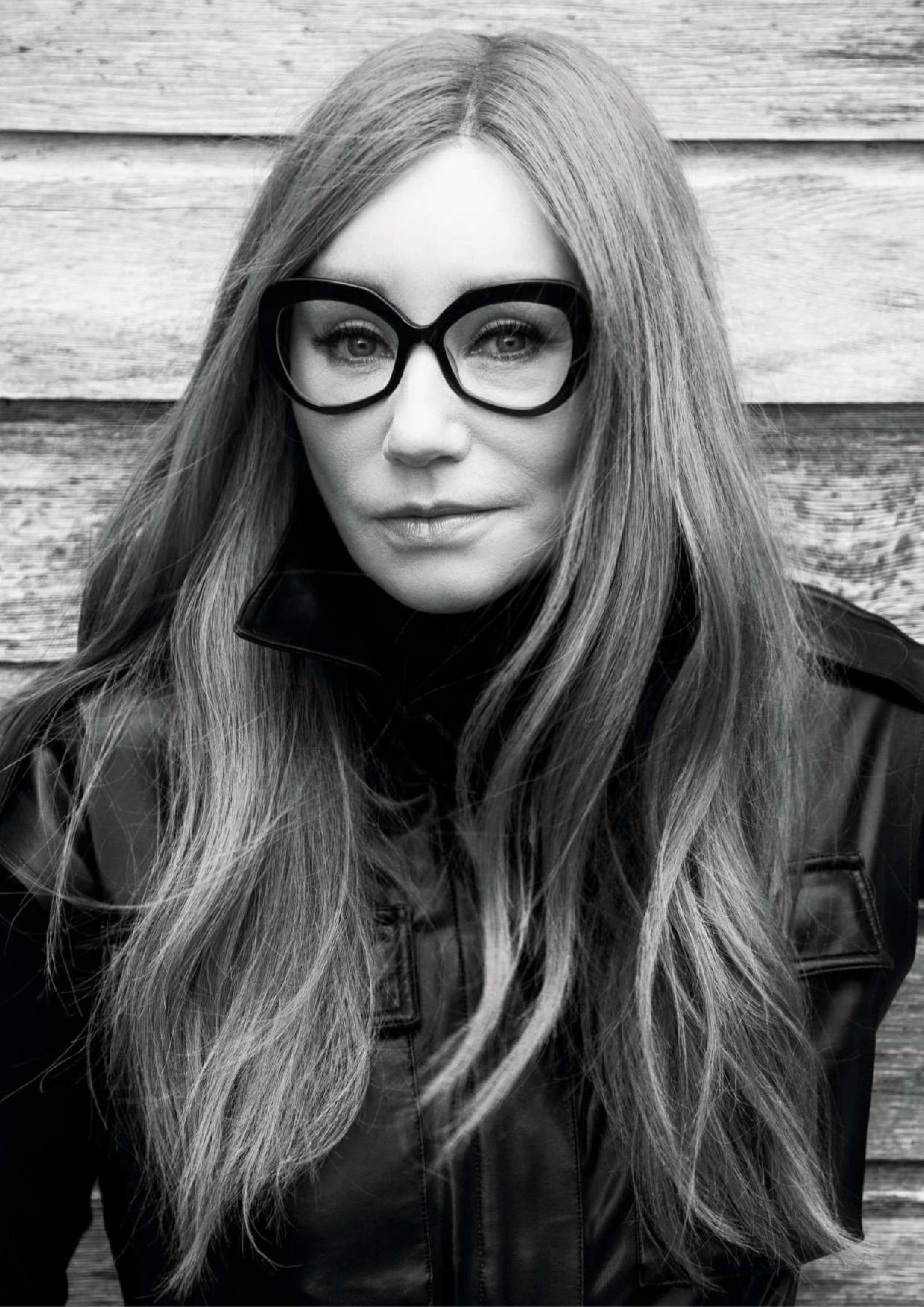


THE MOJO INTERVIEW

A classical prodigy at five, a minister's daughter **playing gay clubs at 13** and, now, a **cult superstar of the keyboard** confessional. In Cornwall and still **wrestling her "Fame Whore"**, it's time to evaluate. "There's a lot of **blood-letting,"** says **Tori Amos**.

Interview by **JOHN AIZLEWOOD** • Portrait by **DESMOND MURRAY**

TORI AMOS IS IN HER GREENHOUSE AND her tomatoes are ripe. "Do you want one? Of course you want one," she says, plucking one off a plant for herself and handing another to her visitor. It is, for the record, delicious: Amos dances a little jig of glee to celebrate. There are giant green pumpkins, "the courgette that ate the moon" and cucumbers. "It's mostly the work of our gardener's mother," she admits.

We're at her three-acre complex, a few miles from the north Cornwall coast. Everyone is double vaccinated, but the gates are closed because next door's hungry sheep take advantage and roam. Behind the gates, there is a hot tub and a firepit. During the lockdown which thwarted Amos's peripatetic lifestyle of touring and inspiration-gathering solo travel, she, husband Mark Hawley, daughter Natashya and Natashya's boyfriend Ollie splashed merrily, before sitting around a fire built by Hawley, listening to Boards Of Canada and D'Angelo.

"Learning to cook, being a mom and a creator, meant I spent more time with Tash in the last year and a half since before she was 11," she says today. "It's been amazing for me. She's shown me so much."

Myra Ellen Amos – 58 on August 22 – was born on a family trip to Newton, North Carolina, and raised back home in Washington DC. After over a decade of scrabbling, some of it fronting faux-glam synth-rockers Y Kant Tori Read, her 1992 breakthrough, *Little Earthquakes*, revealed her to be one of America's bravest and, eventually, most commercially successful female singer-songwriters.

Four years in the making, and initially rejected by a label who tried to replace the piano with guitar, *Little Earthquakes* was harrowing (the real-life sexual assault narrative of Me & A Gun), witty ("You can make me come/That doesn't make you Jesus") and angry ("I wanna spit in their faces"), but always accessible, and introduced Amos to a world which didn't know it needed her. Since then, she's built a global career, making concept albums (2007's *American Doll Posse*), song-cycles (2011's *Night Of Hunters*), covers albums (2001's *Strange Little Girls*) and harpsichord-based LPs (1996's *Boys For Pele*). But whatever she's done, there's been an undercurrent of raw, often deeply personal emotion, whether detailing her miscarriages or her mother Mary Ellen's stroke and subsequent passing.

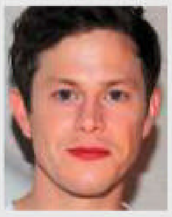
Inside, Amos wishes to be interviewed in the room where she writes her songs. It's dominated by her magnificent Bösendorfer piano, but there are Tori Amos Russian dolls and hundreds of books – from Richard Dawkins and an Eleanor Roosevelt biography, to Carlos Casteneda's probably fictional works, and tomes on shamen and witches. Upstairs, copies of Withnail & I and Band Of Brothers lie on the screening room sofa.

In another building, there is Martian, the studio where Amos has recorded most of every album since 1998's *From The Choirgirl Hotel*. Hawley is her engineer and closest musical collaborator, and this is his

➢

WE'RE NOT WORTHY

Perfume Genius on "a true final boss" on piano



"I love how the math of Tori's music lives in such harmony with inspiration. She can shred, a true final boss on the piano, while pulling divine threads from the ether. I love the worlds she weaves, like she is always following the source wherever it leads. Her translations of what she finds are singular, technically insane and lit up with magic and spirit."

Desmond Murray, Getty

domain: "My wonderful husband says, 'Put me in your songs', but he loves being alone, he's Greta Garbo." When, in 1995, she purchased a house on the banks of the Indian River, Florida, she assumed it would be her creative hub until love intervened.

"Mark said, 'I don't feel Florida, I don't feel I know how to magic up a studio there. I can sit around the pool with a Martini, but, wife, I can deliver a studio here in Cornwall.' Now, when we're stuck in a Cornish gale, he'll look at me and say, 'I'm such a cunt, why didn't we build this studio in fucking Florida?' You can't see such a decision as a sacrifice and I'm not trying to paint it like that. I can't make a record without him, I don't have the skillset, so the decision was almost strategic. Anyway, as my mother said, 'If you need to get out, get on a plane.'"

The follow-up to 2017's *Native Invader* was set for release before last November's US Presidential Election, but the pandemic scuppered that notion. In February she scrapped it. "The songs weren't working any more," she says, "the energy had changed." She wrote a new album, now titled *Ocean To Ocean* and not, she's keen to stress, Ocean 2 Ocean. In Martian, she unveils two songs from it. Metal Water Wood is Amos at her subtly hookiest and most percussive. There's even a synthesizer swirl. Ocean To Ocean itself, meanwhile, is initially more subdued, before it explodes into a wall of punchy melody.

Another track, Spies, must sadly be left for another day. "In Spies' world, kids are having bad dreams and can't sleep, even if they're big kids. Spies could be anywhere, they could be aardvarks. How can it not make you sleep better knowing there are these benevolent beings everywhere? There are consequences if you're a thieving meany, though. The spies deal with you. They don't think it's absurd that scary men get dipped in mustard and Mrs Crabby Apple won't get custard…"

She chuckles. "Yes, I was listening to a lot of Beatles music at the time."

She sits down, smiles, checks that her visitor's coffee is acceptable and nods to signal she's ready…

Why did you scrap a whole album?

The 2020 American election happened, January 6 happened [the day of the Capitol attack in Washington] and I was a different person to the one who'd written it. I didn't want to play those songs because I couldn't hold that energy any more. I can't even explain what that energy was, but it wasn't anger and wasn't just a reaction to the trauma of the last four years of division.

What did you do?

As gales swirled outside, I sat in the garden cottage every morning for three weeks coming to terms. After my first day in the cottage, it became clear I didn't know what the new record needed to be. Three weeks later, I still didn't know. I surrendered to the muses, saying, "It's a mystery how I'm gonna do this or what it's about," although I did know I wanted to write something that reflects where we are. Then I got an answer: "You really need to listen to where people are."

Where are they?

I received letters from fans who knew how to get to me and from those on the frontline in the States getting spat on by people as they were getting their jabs. I was hearing the tremendous challenges and pain most people were going through. I can't lie, there were introverts who said they'd done well in lockdown, but for the most part, people were facing gargantuan emotions they didn't know where to place.

You were accepted by the prestigious Peabody Conservatory as a five-year-old piano prodigy. Does a five-year-old know she's a prodigy?

Just because you're five it doesn't mean you're stupid. I was in classes with teenagers, so I knew something was going on. All I remember is that games were afoot in our puritanical household. My minister father forced me to practise, but my brother Mike brought devil music into the house and played it before our father got home. When he did, Mike would say, "Play that Rolling Rocks song, but make it sound like Bartók." I began to notice the attention I was getting. Then, I noticed the expectations people had. Then, I couldn't help but notice the disappointment when the Peabody kicked me out. If it were true I was a five-year-old prodigy, by 11 I was a failed one in the eyes of everyone.

How does an 11-year-old cope with failure on that scale?

Oh, the rejection was unbelievable. It was like getting kicked off the Olympic team.

After that, shouldn't you be working at McDonald's now?

Oh no, no, no. My father let me wallow and whenever my friends had funny cigarettes, we'd smoke them in his church's steeple, because I knew how to hide up there and not get caught. The chop level of becoming a concert pianist means giving your life to it. I wasn't passionate enough to sit in a room practising for eight hours a day. Schubert's music is of an age and time, but I wanted to practise for an hour and write music that reflected my time for the other seven.

A LIFE IN PICTURES

The whole Tori: images of Amos.

1 Mother and child reunion: Mary Ellen and Tori Myra Ellen Amos.

2 The glamour chase: Y Kant Tori Read, 1988, (from left) Brad Cobb, Matt Sorum, Tori Amos, Steve Caton.

3 Sister act: Amos teams up with P.J. Harvey and Björk on the May 1994 cover of Q.

4 At the altar of fame: Amos on The Tonight Show With Jay Leno, June 27, 1996.

5 "Is this not as interesting as the red carpet?": Tori enjoys her Cornish view, 1999.

6 With Mark Hawley on their wedding day, Church of St Lawrence, West Wycombe, Bucks, February 22, 1998.

7 "Merry Christmas Dad!" Amos and piglet as Madonna & Child bring out the worst in the manboy market with the *Boys For Pele* album sleeve art, 1996.

8 Power couple: Michael Stipe and Tori Amos at Sunset Gower Studios, Hollywood, November 1994. They recorded the still-unreleased duet It Might Hurt A Bit.

9 Feeling blue: Amos in character from the *Strange Little Girls* sleeve art, 2001.

10 Tori in 1996: "I want someone to say, 'This song is the reason I didn't crawl back to a relationship that was abusive.'"

2

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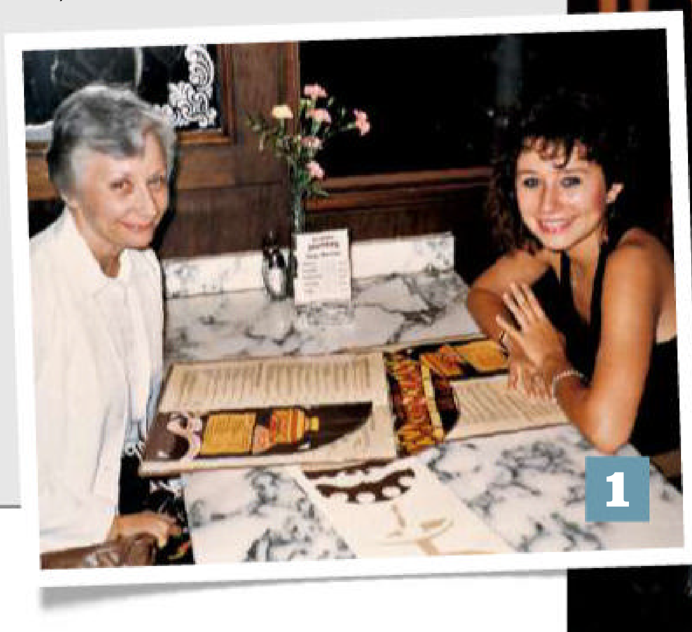
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Courtesy Tori Amos, Getty (3), Shutterstock (2), Allstar, Cindy Palmano

Didn't your father manage you?

He may have been a preacher, but he'd worked in the steel mills and he wasn't gonna have me throw it away. He challenged me: he would help me find a musical job, but I had to get a repertoire first. If he hadn't been a minister, he would have been an agent, and at 13 I was playing Mr Henry's, a gay bar in DC. My parents chaperoned me, so there were contradictions in my father's approach. There, I was reshaped and reformed and I'm so thankful.

Who did you want to emulate?

As a child I survived through songs. I wanted to emulate anyone who I believed: The Beatles, Joni Mitchell, Roberta Flack, Stevie Wonder, Billie Holiday, James Taylor, Simon & Garfunkel, Elton John, early Fleetwood Mac. But the power and energy of Nina Simone and Led Zeppelin blew my mind. Oh and imagination songs, such as David Bowie's Starman. I'm just tipping the iceberg here.

Couldn't you get a deal?

I was making demo tapes in my portastudio, my dad was sending them out and they were getting rejected. Over the years, you start to listen to what some people think you should be and what type of music you should make.

You moved to Los Angeles, but all it meant was more rejection…

After 10 years, some were rejecting me for the second time. People said I should leave music altogether and never consider it again, but like everyone else, I have a Fame Whore.

A Fame Whore?

The part of you that craves adulation. She was going, We're broken, we're tired, we're going to die in this LA piano bar. She was an ageing, rejected courtesan who, at 23, was looking at 18-year-old Sinéad O'Connor and thinking, Tick, tock. So, I listened to her and started writing what I thought record companies wanted. I had to get dragged on my knees to understand that while there are semi-jobbing songwriters who have the gift of making a variation on the hit that's on the radio, I don't.

And then Atlantic signed your band Y Kant Tori Read?

Yes, but I still needed to learn a lesson: just because you can do different styles of music, just because you can fill a slot, doesn't mean that you should.

> "I know **those wounds,** I know what they **taste like.** I know what it means to **feel broken.**"

Hence 1988's *Y Kant Tori Read* album?

Exactly. I would say to you they're not the worst songs ever written, but the intention was to be a pop rock success. I learned that lesson and decided that if I had to go back to the piano bars singing other people's songs to pay my rent, fine. So be it. From then on, all the records have been written from where I am at the time. I've tried to put the actual work, the actual art, above recognition of the work and the art. After feeling a failure post-Peabody, I felt it again after *Y Kant Tori Read*. The reviews came out and people would laugh behind my back. I know those wounds, I know what they taste like. I know what it means to feel broken.

In 1992, *Little Earthquakes* turned everything around. How do you see it now?

It was me. It was the first time I'd made something that was me.

Is that why you followed *Little Earthquakes* with the very different, more experimental, less accessible *Under The Pink* two years later?

You really think that? *Under The Pink* was me as much as *Little Earthquakes*, and don't forget co-producer Eric Rosse had worked on four *Little Earthquakes* tracks. True, I don't believe in making the same record twice, but it was a variation, a record of growth. In my mind, it was a natural progression, certainly not a diversion.

1996's *Boys For Pele* was your most successful album on the charts, but even more experimental, packed with strings, a gospel choir and a brass band, it was divisive, wasn't it?

Yes it was. Myself and Mark worked on it. We weathered that storm and it was quite a storm to weather. Some critics tore my punk harpsichord album to pieces. People in the industry believed it would end my career. Those who didn't get it didn't have the foresight to see what it was: taking the harpsichord, a classical instrument, and saying [on Professional Widow] "starfucker, just like my daddy… give me peace, love and a hard cock". But young people got it and they came to the shows. There's a lot of blood-letting, a lot about patriarchy, a lot about power. For heaven's sake, I recorded it in a Protestant church in Ireland!

You sounded quite cross…

I was getting tired of men telling me, "You need a male producer, you need a hot this, you wanna bring in another songwriter." That album is just WILL YOU STOP TELLING ME WHAT TO DO?

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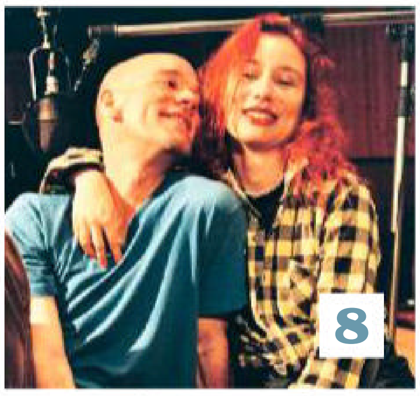

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Satin Worship

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“Boys For Pele was a **storm to weather.** Critics tore my **punk harpsichord album** to pieces.”

And the photograph of you suckling a pig in the artwork?

Ha! That was, Merry Christmas Dad! He just said “Tori Ellen, I’ve no idea what this is.” It brought out the worst in the manboy market. A manboy is not going to understand a woman bringing the non-kosher back to the Madonna & Child as a Christmas card. It doesn’t matter. People who understood symbology and archetypes understood it.

Who are these manboys?

They’re in their thirties and older. You think, Snap out of it, lads, but it’s why, unfortunately, you see late-fortysomething men with twentysomething women. Not all men are manboys, though, just some, and it doesn’t only happen to women…

How did the Fame Whore take to Cornwall?

Cornwall has been her greatest teacher, probably the only way to get her to want to do something else. I accompany her to the bottom of the garden and say, “Is this not as interesting as the red carpet?” You can have good conversations on the red carpet, but sometimes I wonder whether those whose business acumen and ability to sell their brand might be the reasons they’re on the carpet, more than their work.

Your first album of this century, the 2001 covers album *Strange Little Girls*, wasn’t your favourites but male-penned songs from Eminem to Slayer that a woman could re-interpret and invert. Track selection must have been a Herculean task…

It was a team effort. We listened to an awful lot of music. It’s lonely being a songwriter, but this concept was a think tank. We recorded Bruce Springsteen’s Growing Up and Elvis Costello’s Hoover Factory and After The Fall, but they didn’t make it because they weren’t telling the story we needed to tell.

Where do the fans fit in? Does someone filter your letters?

No. When I’m on tour, people hand me them at meet’n’greets. I know I can’t do much in this world, but I go through them all. It might take me weeks. People say, “They’re taking up space on the bus, why don’t we torch them?” My answer is that I haven’t read them yet. I remember the letter from the little girl in glasses. I remember the letter from France with the three chocolate dogs. If they’re not there, I promise you, I will know.

Is reading them cathartic or a burden?

I understand why some people might see it like that, but neither. It’s an exchange, a collaboration, a conversation that not many artists get to have. It’s learning and listening, growing and hearing. It’s quite something to sit and read – really read – a six-page letter where somebody is trusting you with how they got through their grief, how they work through their break-ups or death. It’s a privilege.

You write of grief yourself. It coursed through the last album, 2017’s *Native Invader*, especially Reindeer King and Mary’s Eyes…

That album was fuelled by watching my mother bravely go through each day after her stroke. Her life and dignity had been stolen. Her stroke was so bad I thought we’d be relieved when we lost her, because it was cruel keeping her alive. I was wrong: it was beyond what I had expected. I was in emotional overwhelm, unable to get out of grief for some time. Then, when I was still grieving a year and a half later, Tash sat next to me and said, “I miss grandma too, but I need my mom back.” That’s why I’m sitting in front of you now and why I’m not broken.

You usually travel to touch inspiration before recording – New Mexico, the house in Florida, Ireland – but that couldn’t happen this time.

"I'm not trying to write someone else's songs": Tori Amos goes to work on her Bösendorfer grand piano at home in north Cornwall, August 2021.

Desmond Murray

No and I missed it. Normally I take pilgrimages. I travel, I observe, I write songs and I learn from people. Sometimes I'll be in Florida for two months by myself. Why do you think I still have a good marriage after twentysomething years? I make my husband miss me…

Is your mother's spirit on *Ocean To Ocean*?

Oh yes. She's in there. She did so much right as a mother, but the wounds aren't where they were two years ago. I wrote myself out of hell. She picked the Florida house out for me, you know. She said, "When you're looking out over the Indian River onto Bird Island, I want you to know that I'm looking too, I'm there with you." The pandemic meant that it's been the longest time I haven't been to Florida, but right before the pandemic, going out on the water, kayaking down the Indian River, was healing my grief.

The pandemic really changed you, didn't it?

I'm a different person. We haven't gone through anything like this for 100 years, when the world was different. As a songwriter, could I write to that? In February I thought I had failed, because I'd been hanging on to work that wasn't what I felt people needed to hear. Energetically it was just not fresh, unlike when I feel that breeze walking on the Cornish cliffs.

How are you and God these days?

Well, Jesus and I are all right. We're good. I have a lot of respect for trying to love your neighbour as yourself and trying to do unto others as you would yourself. Whether you believe Jesus lived or not, they're good teachings. As a minister's daughter, God is an interesting conversation. I'm more interested right now in talking about spiritual energy which doesn't have projection from people's religious bias. Spiritual force is real, powerful and something we can all choose to tap into.

In 2006, the box set, *The Piano*, just about marked the halfway point from *Little Earthquakes* to today. After that, your music evolved in all sorts of directions.

"Evolved?" Hmm. The next year's *American Doll Posse* was me diving into a concept, into different archetypes of the Greek pantheon, but it was also the result of years of therapy from the mid-'90s to my therapist retiring in 2005. Those archetypes were still there on *Abnormally Attracted To Sin*, but they were much more integrated.

Even before *Abnormally Attracted To Sin* was released in May 2009, you were recording the stripped-down seasonal album *Midwinter Graces* on that year's world tour for a Christmas 2009 release. That must have been a strain, no matter how soothing Coventry Carol was?

We recorded the bones of it here in Cornwall and the rest on the run. I'd never done that before and I won't be doing it again. It was almost my divorce album.

When you adapted classical composers such as Schubert, Schumann, Debussy on 2011's *Night Of Hunters*, it was the closest you've come to a Peabody-friendly album. Did the record label challenge you to create what became the first simultaneous US Top 10 classical, rock and alternative album?

"Challenge" isn't the right word, but I was approached to do a song cycle by Alexander Buhr at Deutsche Grammophon. He was a real team player who loved sharing his wealth of knowledge. Some purists thought my lyrics meant I was messing, but some of the composers' spirits gave me permission to mess. Others didn't.

2022 will mark 30 years since *Little Earthquakes*. On tour, you play radically different sets each night and each album tends to mark a new path. Have you deliberately avoided becoming a legacy artist?

I don't know what a legacy artist is and I honestly don't have the analytical mind to take that approach. Live, I'm always trying to find what makes a good show. There are going to be familiar songs, but hopefully not the same ones every night. I'm very fortunate that my audience doesn't demand I deliver Cornflake Girl every night. I guess the point is that I have to find a way to put the work of the last 15 years alongside the songs of the first 15…

How has your songwriting evolved?

I still like to think I can design and craft sonic architecture that can hopefully take you to wherever you want to go. That's always been the goal. Writing songs is such a tricky thing, you know. I can write a song a day, but it doesn't mean that song has magic, because that's not true. It might just be a ditty I make up for myself. What I have noticed is that while I still write alone, other songwriters don't. They start off by themselves, but now they've got 10 people in a room. That could have been me, because publishers were always knocking on my door to try to push their writers, possibly to chase a certain commercial path, ker-ching, ker-ching.

But I've learned that people respond to my work because I'm not trying to write someone else's songs. I have to write something that comes from the heart and that includes historical character songs such as Josephine on *To Venus & Back* and Yes, Anastasia on *Under The Pink*. I'm not crafting by numbers here.

Can you let go of your songs when they're out in the world?

When they leave here, I have to. I don't want to control, I want to create a sonic travel machine that can take you anywhere you want to go, be it the centre of the earth or the bottom of the ocean. To help you get there, though, you might need to go to your wound, to your broken heart.

Is that because your fanbase gives you licence others don't have?

Oh yes. I'm absolutely aware of that. If I'm gonna be tough on myself and my work and put aside songs, as I did in February because it wasn't right, they say "We will listen and we will be open." What a great position to be in.

What do you want?

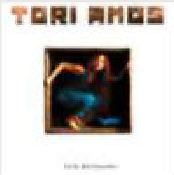
I want one song to resonate. I want someone at a meet'n'greet to say, "This song is the reason I didn't crawl back to a relationship that was abusive." That's enough.

THE TORI MANIFESTO

Three broadsides from the Amos *oeuvre*, by **John Aizlewood**.

THE GREAT SOUL-BARER

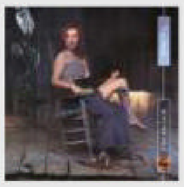
Tori Amos
Little Earthquakes
★★★★
(ATLANTIC, 1992)



After over a decade of struggle and rejection, *Little Earthquakes* was the vindication of Tori Amos. At one delirious sitting, it cast her as the piano-pounding singer-songwriter with a waspish wit, willingness to share and an artful way with a pop song such as Silent All These Years, originally written for Al Stewart. She would never sound like this again.

THE GREAT DIVIDER

Tori Amos
Boys For Pele
★★★★
(ATLANTIC, 1996)



Her self-confessed attempt to make a record that was both contemporary and classical involved her learning a new instrument – the harpsichord – and drenching her first self-produced album in it. The results, from the spartan Father Lucifer to the strings-laden Marianne, were uncompromising but beguiling; it became her highest-charting album in the UK and US.

THE GREAT SORROW

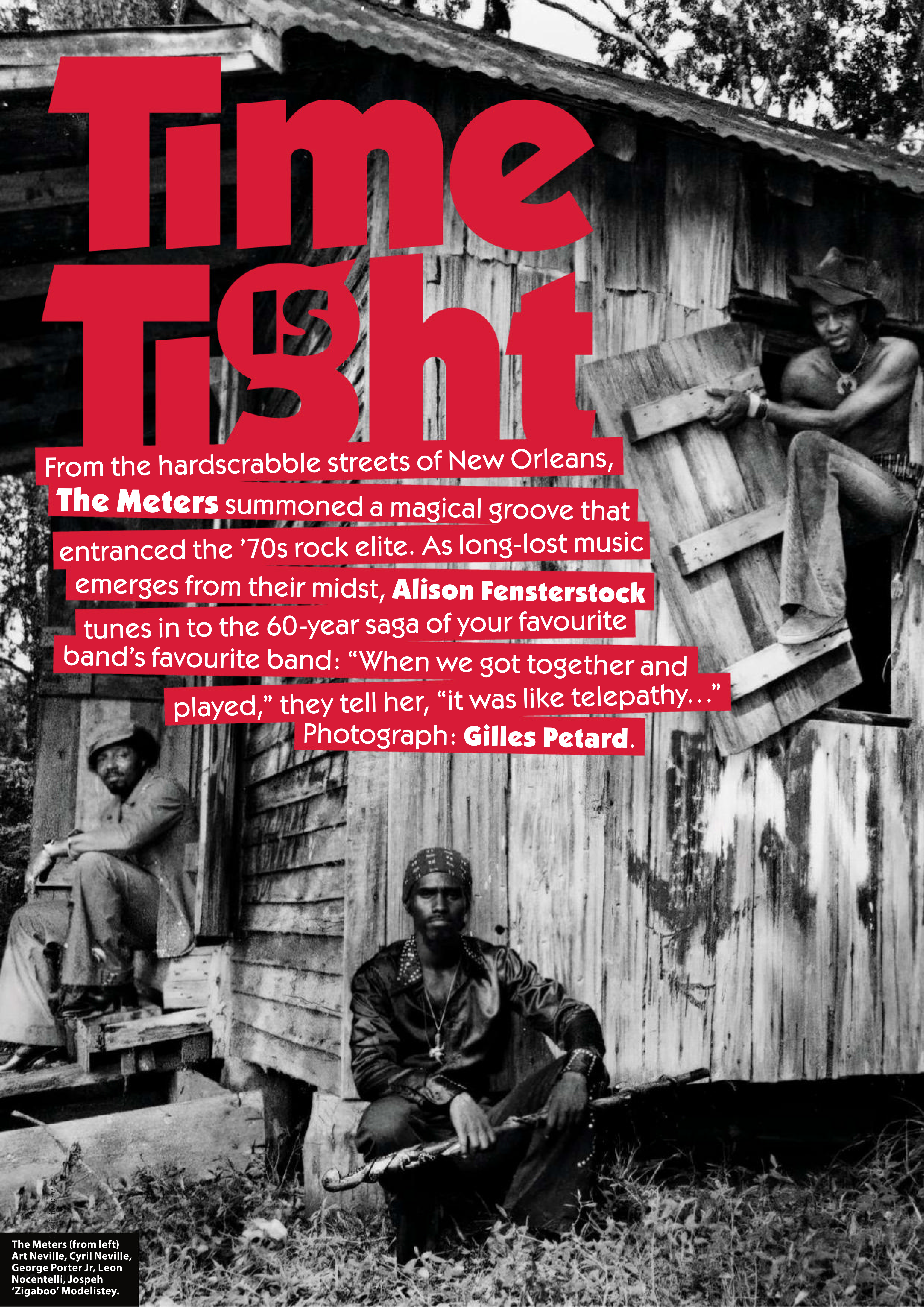
Tori Amos
Native Invader
★★★★
(DECCA, 2017)

The elegant despair that courses through the politically charged Broken Arrow, or Benjamin where she berates the fossil-fuel lobby, and the marriage-examining Chocolate Song ("the silent evenings"), it all makes this album – recorded in the wake of her mother's stroke – a sometimes harrowing listen. Yet there's real, raw beauty with the pain, while Up The Creek is pop perfection.

Time is Tight

From the hardscrabble streets of New Orleans, **The Meters** summoned a magical groove that entranced the '70s rock elite. As long-lost music emerges from their midst, **Alison Fensterstock** tunes in to the 60-year saga of your favourite band's favourite band: "When we got together and played," they tell her, "it was like telepathy…"

Photograph: **Gilles Petard**.



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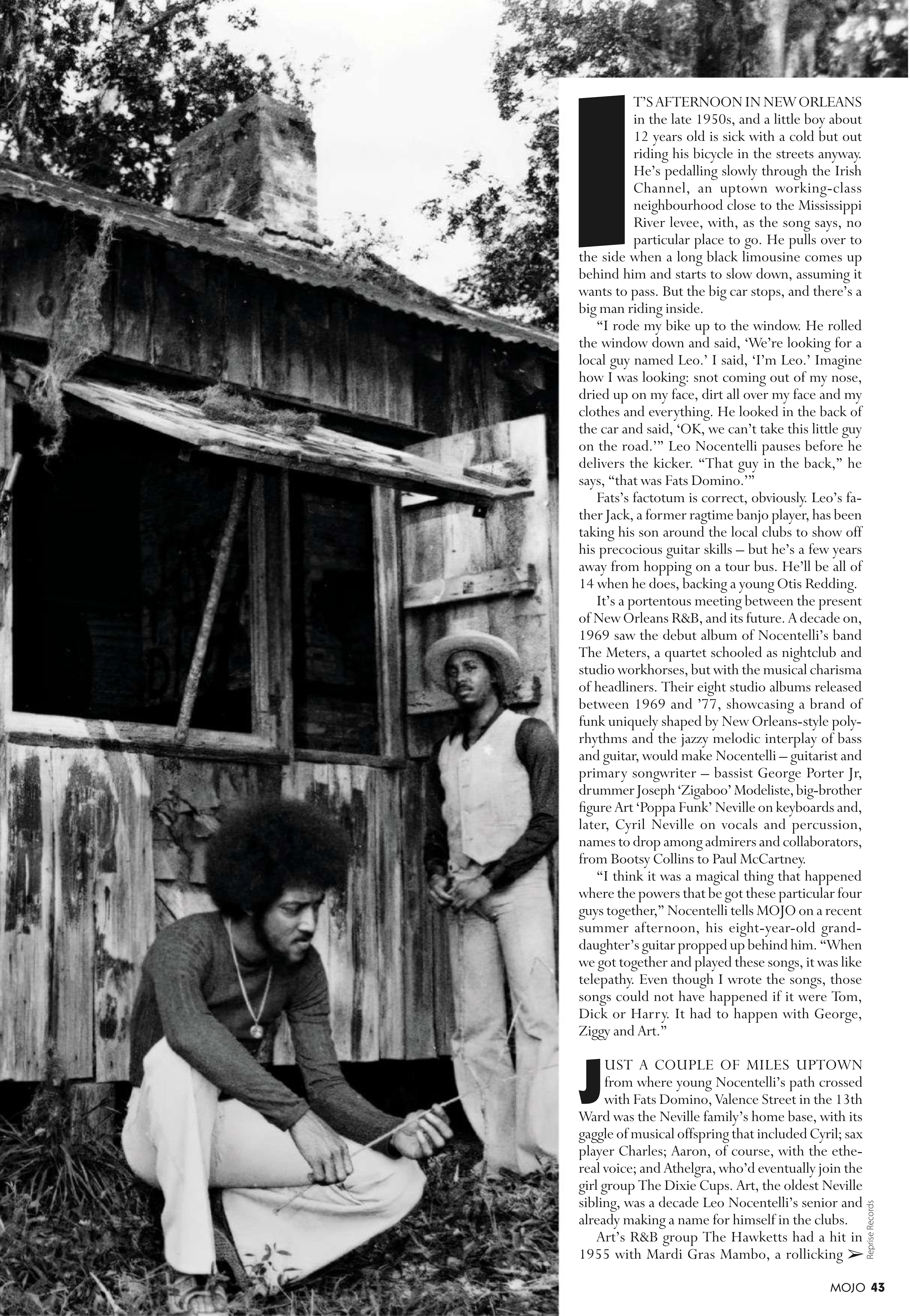
The Meters (from left) Art Neville, Cyril Neville, George Porter Jr, Leon Nocentelli, Jospeh 'Zigaboo' Modelistey.



Reprise Records

IT'S AFTERNOON IN NEW ORLEANS in the late 1950s, and a little boy about 12 years old is sick with a cold but out riding his bicycle in the streets anyway. He's pedalling slowly through the Irish Channel, an uptown working-class neighbourhood close to the Mississippi River levee, with, as the song says, no particular place to go. He pulls over to the side when a long black limousine comes up behind him and starts to slow down, assuming it wants to pass. But the big car stops, and there's a big man riding inside.

"I rode my bike up to the window. He rolled the window down and said, 'We're looking for a local guy named Leo.' I said, 'I'm Leo.' Imagine how I was looking: snot coming out of my nose, dried up on my face, dirt all over my face and my clothes and everything. He looked in the back of the car and said, 'OK, we can't take this little guy on the road.'" Leo Nocentelli pauses before he delivers the kicker. "That guy in the back," he says, "that was Fats Domino.'"

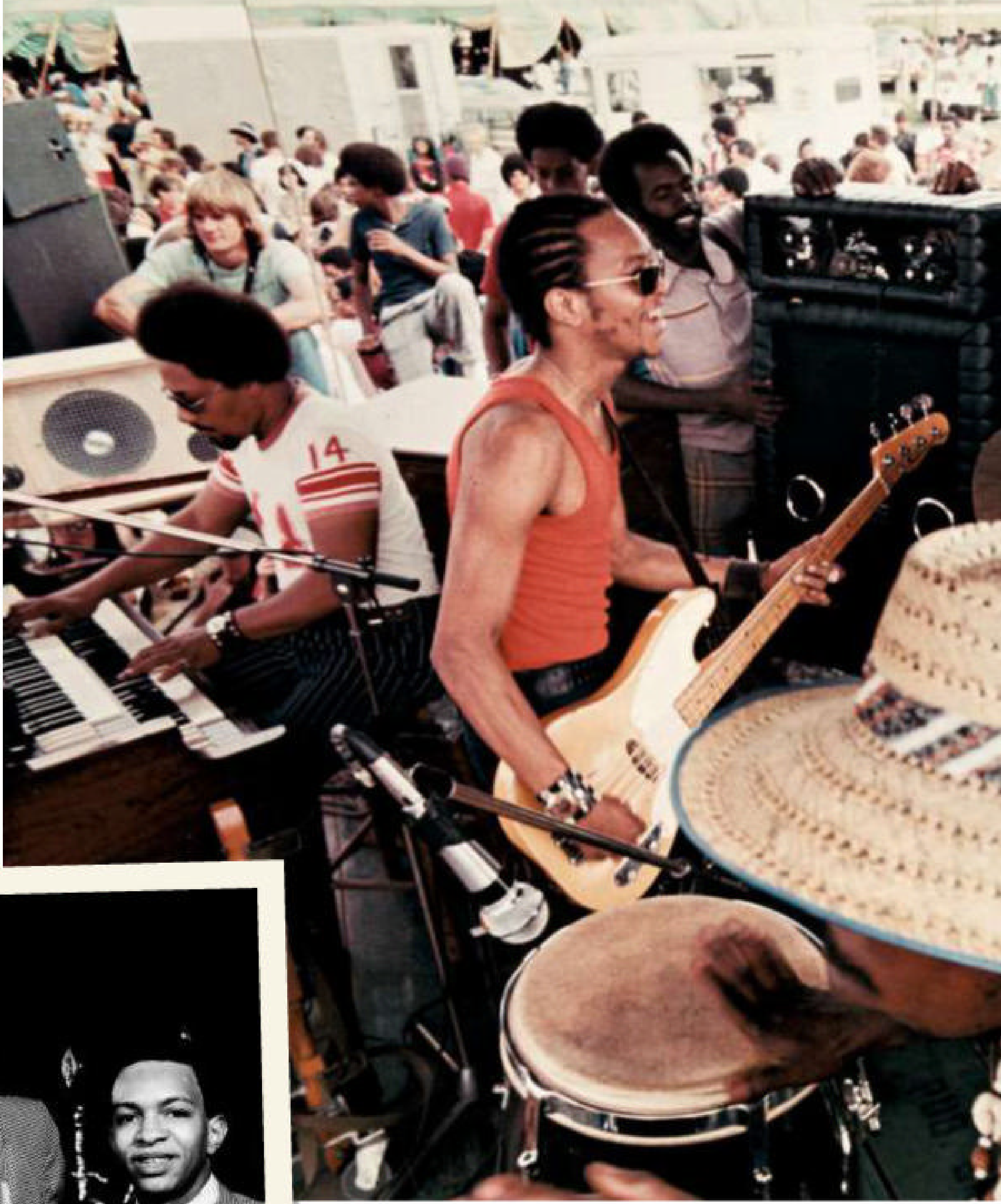
Fats's factotum is correct, obviously. Leo's father Jack, a former ragtime banjo player, has been taking his son around the local clubs to show off his precocious guitar skills – but he's a few years away from hopping on a tour bus. He'll be all of 14 when he does, backing a young Otis Redding.

It's a portentous meeting between the present of New Orleans R&B, and its future. A decade on, 1969 saw the debut album of Nocentelli's band The Meters, a quartet schooled as nightclub and studio workhorses, but with the musical charisma of headliners. Their eight studio albums released between 1969 and '77, showcasing a brand of funk uniquely shaped by New Orleans-style polyrhythms and the jazzy melodic interplay of bass and guitar, would make Nocentelli – guitarist and primary songwriter – bassist George Porter Jr, drummer Joseph 'Zigaboo' Modeliste, big-brother figure Art 'Poppa Funk' Neville on keyboards and, later, Cyril Neville on vocals and percussion, names to drop among admirers and collaborators, from Bootsy Collins to Paul McCartney.

"I think it was a magical thing that happened where the powers that be got these particular four guys together," Nocentelli tells MOJO on a recent summer afternoon, his eight-year-old granddaughter's guitar propped up behind him. "When we got together and played these songs, it was like telepathy. Even though I wrote the songs, those songs could not have happened if it were Tom, Dick or Harry. It had to happen with George, Ziggy and Art."

JUST A COUPLE OF MILES UPTOWN from where young Nocentelli's path crossed with Fats Domino, Valence Street in the 13th Ward was the Neville family's home base, with its gaggle of musical offspring that included Cyril; sax player Charles; Aaron, of course, with the ethereal voice; and Athelgra, who'd eventually join the girl group The Dixie Cups. Art, the oldest Neville sibling, was a decade Leo Nocentelli's senior and already making a name for himself in the clubs.

Art's R&B group The Hawketts had a hit in 1955 with Mardi Gras Mambo, a rollicking ➢



< Caribbean-inflected number that remains a carnival staple in New Orleans. He also recorded for the Los Angeles-based label Specialty, and after a stint in the Navy signed with the local Instant Records. Instant had a rising young producer and songwriter on its roster named Allen Toussaint, and in 1961 he wrote Neville's next solo classic, the tender love song All These Things.

Art and Aaron Neville were adults, but lived close to the family home where Cyril, the youngest sibling, still lived with their parents. "Art Neville and Aaron and all those guys, they were like senior citizens," explains Meters bassist George Porter Jr. "They were the big guys, so they didn't hang with none of us." But he and Zigaboo Modeliste, whose families were close enough that the two were raised "as cousins", were the same age as Cyril, and when the Porter and Modeliste families moved into the Nevilles' neighbourhood, all three boys wound up attending Samuel L. Green junior high school.

They also became musical confrères, with raucous jam sessions in the backyard that neighbours failed to appreciate. "I had an acoustic guitar," says Porter. "And we used to go in Zig's backyard, and we would be jamming and stuff, beating on cans and boxes. And the lady on the other side of the fence obviously didn't like music and she called the police on us one day. We kind of scattered once we heard the police was coming – and I left my guitar in the backyard and the police stomped it and broke it, destroyed the guitar. It was years before I got another instrument."

AROUND THE SAME time, the teenage Leo Nocentelli was picking up his first session work with Allen Toussaint, playing on early-'60s hits like Lee Dorsey's Ya Ya – his first studio job, at age 14 – and Ernie K-Doe's Mother-In-Law. Cyril and Ziggy, slightly younger, were still thick as thieves on Valence Street, practising together on the drum kit Ziggy's parents had bought him, which came in handy when they got the chance to split a gig with Art's band.

"Art hired me, asked my mom if I could do the gig because I was underage," Modeliste told the New Orleans music monthly Offbeat in 2005. "Cyril would play some of the set and I'd play some of it." These were frat party shows, where they'd perform Chuck Berry and Little Richard covers for the college kids alongside Art's songs. "I was making money," said Modeliste, "and I was polishing up my game."

George Porter Jr, now playing bass, was doing the same thing with the R&B act Irving Bannister And The All-Stars, playing the same kinds of small clubs where Nocentelli's dad had showed off his son's talent.

"Art used to hang hard with a few of the older, well-known musicians, Benny Spellman [of Fortune Teller and Lipstick Traces fame] and those kinds of guys, at a club on the corner of Galvez and Washington Avenue," says Porter. "The name of the club was Charlie's Corner and it was like a key club, but it didn't have a key. You would knock on the door and the guy would slide a little window open, and if he recognised you, you got in."

Irving Bannister's All-Stars would play a club across the street, which became an after-party destination for the older players hanging out at Charlie's. "Fats used to come over there all the time. Once he really souped up across the street, he would come over, always about a half an hour before the band was getting ready to get off, at about two o'clock in the morning. He would come over and want to sit in."

STEREO
The Meters
SOPHISTICATED CISSY
CISSY STRUT
EASE BACK
JOSIE
THE METERS
LOOK-KA PY PY
THE METERS
STRUTTIN
JOSIE

Struttin' their stuff: the band at the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, 1974; (left, from left), Nocentelli, Art Neville, Modeliste and Porter, 1969; (insets below left) early albums; (opposite, from top) The Neville Brothers in 1981 (from left) Charles, Aaron, Art and Cyril; later Meters long-players.

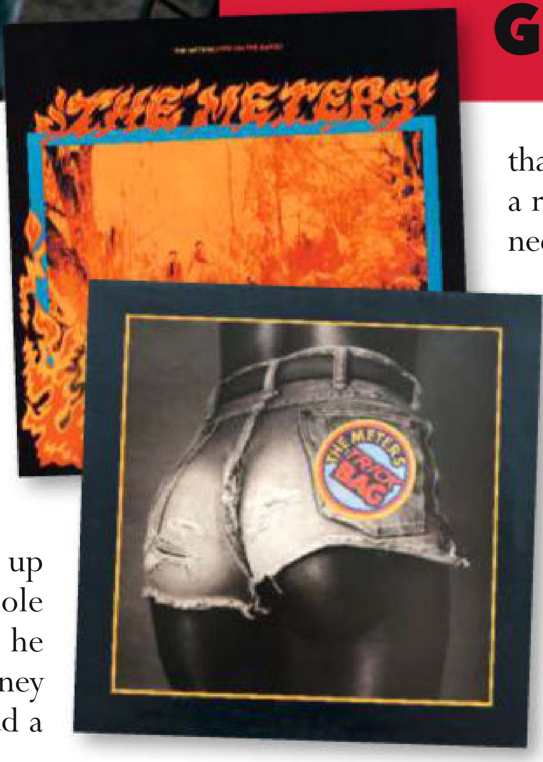
Getty (2), Photograph by Michael P. Smith © The Historic New Orleans Collection

Needless to say, nobody was going to say no to Fats Domino. Porter and the All-Stars would back the star till 3am or later – until he was satisfied.

A year or two earlier Porter, still playing guitar at that point, had picked up a gig with Art Neville's band and – playing only rhythm parts, declining to solo – left the older man unimpressed with his skills. But he got his second chance. "This one particular night," says Porter, "Art Neville followed Fats across the street, and Art and Fats came in together. And at the end of the night, Art came over to me and said, 'Now that's the instrument you ought to be playing.'"

In 1966, Art Neville returned from a tour with brother Aaron promoting the hit Tell It Like It Is, ready to regroup. He rounded up Porter, Modeliste and Nocentelli, as well as brothers Aaron and Cyril for vocals, plus a sax player, for a regular gig at the Nitecap Lounge on Louisiana Avenue. Initially, the band was christened the Neville Sounds – the work of Jack the Cat, the popular local DJ who MC'd. "He used to introduce us with the song Won't You Come Home, Bill Bailey," remembers Porter. "He would sing, 'Won't you come home, Art Neville, and bring that Neville sound.'"

"I left my guitar in the backyard and the police stomped it and broke it. It was years before I got another instrument."
George Porter, Jr



After about a year at the Nitecap, Art Neville landed a gig at the Ivanhoe club in the French Quarter, on Bourbon Street. Cyril and Aaron had peeled off for now, as well as sax player Gary Brown. Now it was an instrumental quartet, on a strict schedule. "That's what really got the band tight, the Ivanhoe," Modeliste told Offbeat. "Because we would play six nights a week, from 10 o'clock until two in the morning. You do that six nights a week, you're bound to get tight."

During hour-long set breaks, Porter would run up the street to make extra cash playing behind pole dancers. "And when that gig wasn't happening," he remembers, "I'd go across the street and make money shooting pool. Leo was really good, too – Leo had a really good pool hand."

In New Orleans, like the rest of the American South, racial integration became law only in 1964. Even then, it was slow to reach Bourbon Street.

"Playing clubs on Bourbon Street, we couldn't mingle with the audience," explains Nocentelli. "The Ivanhoe was a corner bar and our music was so R&B that it attracted a lot of black people – we'd look out the window and there's about 200, 300 people. They couldn't stop blacks from going on Bourbon Street, but they could stop them from going in the clubs. They were standing out there, and there was more audience outside than they would have inside. It kind of leaves an almost indelible scar on your brain," he says. "You remember that. You remember how you were treated."

AT THE END OF THE '60s, THE NEVILLE SOUND group took the opportunity to record with Allen Toussaint – a move that proved fateful in many ways. With his business partner, Marshall Sehorn, the producer chose a new name for the quartet that evoked their mastery of rhythm and timing: The Meters. Their eponymous first album on the Josie label launched their greasy, gritty instrumental sound, with two Nocentelli compositions, Cissy Strut and Sophisticated Cissy, landing them Top 10 R&B hits in 1969.

To George Porter Jr, the pleasures of commercial success were conflicted. "When we were playing at the Nitecap, I was focused on that this was a band," he says. "But when we became a recording band, I started realising this thing isn't necessarily all about a band. It was sometimes more me, me, who writes the better songs and who gets to choose which songs get recorded?

"I was more into The Meters' early days than the latter days," he says. "Those first three albums, we weren't competing with anybody. Once we got into being a production thing, once we started adding horns and background singers and all that kind of stuff, we just became like all the other bands."

Few would ever call The Meters "just like other bands". But to Porter, the group's rise also marked a kind of loss of creative innocence.

In 1972, managed by Sehorn and Toussaint (who also owned half their publishing rights), The Meters became the house band at Sea-Saint Studios, the brand-new space in the Gentilly neighbourhood where Toussaint's producing skills would lure acts including Labelle and Robert Palmer. After switching to Warner subsidiary Reprise, a deal that tied them to Toussaint and Sehorn more knottily when Josie's parent company, Jubilee Records, went bankrupt, The Meters hit the R&B charts again in 1974 with Hey Pocky A-Way, a distillation of Mardi Gras Indian chants mixed with their own scorching funk. The Meters also began their secondary, accidental career as your favourite musician's favourite musicians. They hung out with Led Zeppelin, played the record release party for Wings' *Venus And Mars* album, backed Dr. John on his Atco albums *Desitively Bonnaroo* and *In The Right Place*, and opened for The Rolling Stones in 1975 and 1976.

And yet, within the band, all was not bonnaroo. "They threw me out of the group," Art Neville told Offbeat in 2005. He'd wanted to sign with Allman Brothers manager Phil Walden, but his bandmates and the hometown team of Toussaint and Sehorn disagreed. ("How can you throw out the guy that starts the group? Hey, that's what I asked," Neville said.) Art returned to the fold, though, and during the Reprise period, so did Cyril, who shone on 1975's sizzling *Fire On The Bayou* and as a de facto frontman on the Stones tour – an experience The Meters describe as eye-opening in several ways.

"When I saw [The Rolling Stones] it completely blew my ➢

mind, because I had never seen entertainers on that level – doing what they were doing, living the way they wanted to live, playing the music they wanted to play, and getting paid to do it," Ziggy Modeliste told Wax Poetics in 2020. "I thought the music we were playing was just as good, if not better, and I always wanted to know, 'What are they doing that we're not doing?' I never knew… They have longevity, which is what it takes, good management and good people behind you. Power."

Porter agrees that empowerment was the missing ingredient.

"I think the front office wanted us to be the band that played Allen Toussaint's sessions," he says. "The problem was that we just didn't have a front office that promoted us like those other bands. We were out there on the road playing with those other bands and killing them every night. We were massacring these guys, these big bands, but we didn't have a team that promoted us. We missed the boat."

Cyril Neville, though, was adding a new spark to The Meters, and Modeliste was flexing fresh muscles as well, emerging as a confident and powerful songwriter. But external tensions were only mounting, and wearing away at the group's tight creative bond. In 1976, The Meters joined Neville brothers Charles and Aaron in the studio with the Nevilles' uncle George 'Big Chief Jolly' Landry to make the landmark, Toussaint-produced Mardi Gras Indian funk album *The Wild Tchoupitoulas* – the first time all four Neville brothers recorded together.

It was the beginning of that iconic New Orleans outfit, spelling the end of the one that preceded it. All of The Meters, particularly Art Neville, were frustrated with a new road manager, Rupert Surcouf, installed by Sehorn – who had also just put out *Trick Bag*, a collection of demos and random Meters cuts that the band hadn't approved. After the release of the ironically titled *New Directions*, on Warner Bros, in 1977, The Meters were left directionless. They called it quits.

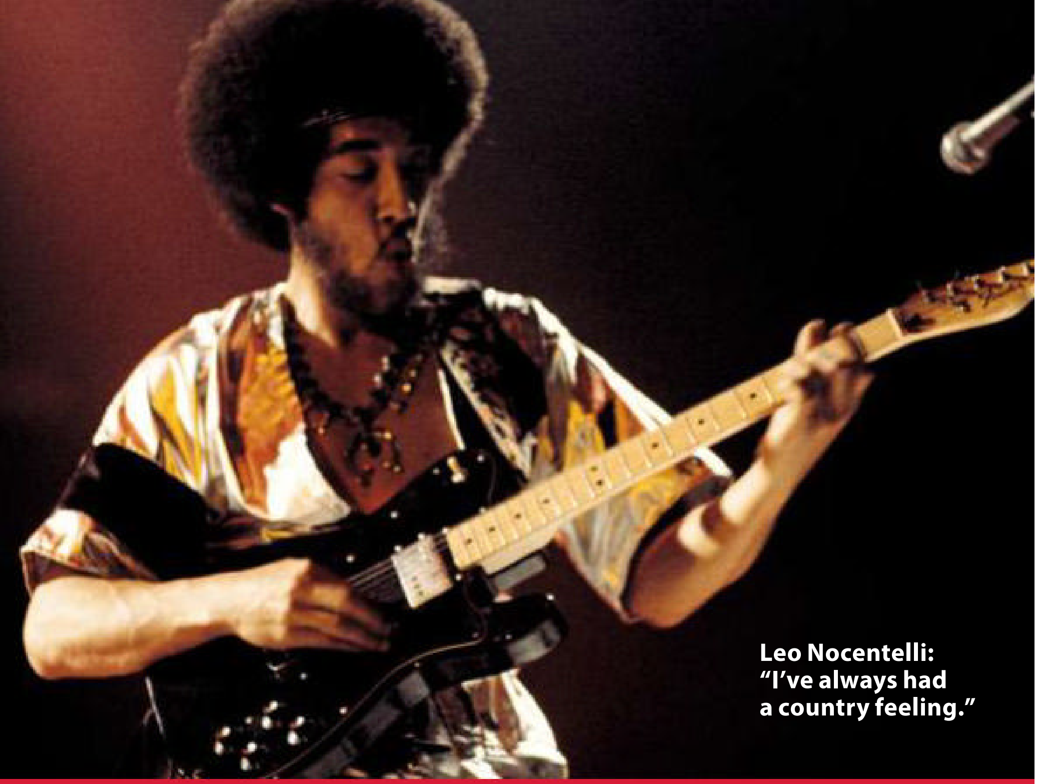
In retrospect, George Porter Jr wonders if better communication between band members could have protected them from the business stresses that were battering his group. "As a bass player and as a person that was smoking lots of pot and taking acid," he says, "I kind of gave up on trying to be part of the power struggle in the band. But I think now, removing myself might have shortened the band's existence, because I eliminated a voice from the discussion."

It was a band that "didn't have a real band leader," he continues, "although Neville on paper was pretty much the band leader, and everybody respected Art, because it was him that put us in the same room together." The personality vibes were badly matched, too. "Three Capricorns in the studio at the same time. And we were bumping heads."

"On a business level, we was four separate guys going four separate ways," says Leo Nocentelli. "It wasn't going to change for nobody. So that led to the downfall of the business aspect of The Meters. But musically, we was always able to communicate."

UNTIL ART NEVILLE'S DEATH AT AGE 81 IN JULY 2019, those channels of communication were periodically reopened. There were regular reunions, notably in 2000 in San Francisco, in New Orleans at the last New Orleans Jazz And Heritage Festival before Hurricane Katrina in 2005, and in Manchester, Tennessee at the Bonnaroo Festival in 2011 with Allen Toussaint and Dr. John. The same year, their superfans the Red Hot Chili Peppers convinced The Meters to join them on-stage at the Voodoo Experience festival in New Orleans. Line-ups entitled The Funky Meters, The Meters Experience and The Meter Men – featuring different equations that always totalled less than all four – have taken the stage over the past 40-odd years.

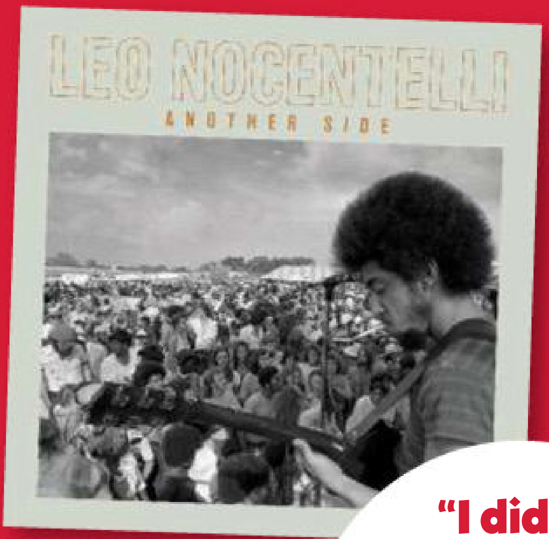
"Since Art is gone there can never again be a Meters or a Funky Meters," Porter says now. "He was an integral part of what made both bands. It's been a little more than two years since my friend has gone home, and I still feel his spirit in my dreams. For a while it bothered me, but now I look forward to those visits; sometimes I wake up with a smile on my face. We can always get a keyboard



Leo Nocentelli:
"I've always had a country feeling."

Beyond The Fonk

Long forgotten, then displaced by Katrina, **Leo Nocentelli**'s stirring '70s solo album returns from the waves.



IN THE first years of the '70s, Leo Nocentelli had already planted his flag in a brand-new sound – the gritty, greasy, unmistakably New Orleansian funk of The Meters, his guitar squarely in the sonic spotlight of indelible songs such as the tough and slinky Cissy Strut. That Crescent City-stewed soul was beginning to be in high demand, too. Signed to Reprise, The Meters were about to head out on a European tour with Dr. John and Professor Longhair after serving as backing band on Dr. John's hit 1973 LP, *In The Right Place*. Soon they'd do the same for Labelle on the *Nightbirds* album as house band at producer Allen Toussaint and his business partner Marshall Sehorn's soon-to-open Sea-Saint recording studio. But there was another side to Leo.

"A funk player being what I was noted as, doing this type of album was really strange, I guess, to other people," says Nocentelli 50 years later. "But I've always had a country feeling in me."

The tender, intimate acoustic singer-songwriter cuts playing on repeat on the radio inspired him, he says – especially James Taylor's 1970 *Sweet Baby James*. (Several years later, The Meters would record Suite For 20 G from that LP on their own *Trick Bag*.) In any downtime he could grab, Nocentelli drafted top-notch local players like Meters bandmates George Porter Jr and Zigaboo Modeliste, jazz drummer James Black and Toussaint on keyboards to record the new solo compositions he was writing in that gentle vein: introspective love songs like Thinking and I Wanna Cry, the workingman's blues Riverfront, character sketches such as Pretty Mittie and You've Become A Habit.

But things got busier with The Meters and the songs began to feel distant to Nocentelli. The tapes went on the shelf at Sea-Saint in the Gentilly neighbourhood of New Orleans, which filled up like a bowl when the levees broke after Hurricane Katrina in 2005, destroying uncountable musical treasures. But not, amazingly, Nocentelli's unfinished LP.

> **"I didn't think I would remember what the lyrics were. I didn't think I would ever hear them again."**

Safe up on the studio's second floor, the tapes began a cross-country journey. First, along with tape boxes the studio's current owner salvaged, to a storage facility in Southern California. Then to another one, and when rent went unpaid, on to a swap-meet vendor who speculated on foreclosed storage units. Next to last, to a shopper who knew what he was looking at when he saw names like Lee Dorsey and Ernie K-Doe on boxes marked with Sea-Saint's name and address. This was Mike Nishita, a studio owner himself and brother of Beastie Boys keyboardist 'Money Mark' Nishita.

And then finally, of course, back to Leo, who'll see the project – aptly titled *Another Side* – released in November.

"I didn't think I would remember what the lyrics were that I wrote," says Nocentelli. "I didn't think I would ever hear them again. Actually, when I listen to it now sometimes I can't believe that I wrote those lyrics, those chord progressions. It's like a spiritual experience."

Another Side is released by Light In The Attic on November 19, 2021.

“We were out there on the road massacring these guys, these big bands, but we didn’t have a team that promoted us. We missed the boat.” **George Porter, Jr**

Meters’ running: (above, from left) Modeliste, C Neville, Porter, Nocentelli, A Neville; (insets from top right) backing Dr. John, ’70s; The Wild Tchoupitoulas, 1980; with Keith Richards and Ron Wood in The New Barbarians, 1979; (right) The Meters still ticking over in 2000 (from left) Nocentelli, Porter, A Neville, Modeliste.

Photograph by Michael P. Smith © The Historic New Orleans Collection (2), Getty (3), Fotex, Avalon

player, but we could never get the magic that is Art.”

Meanwhile, Porter’s love for improvisation has found him embraced by the Grateful Dead-adjacent jam band world, particularly with his longstanding project, Runnin’ Pardners. “And with a lot of these old instrumental songs, there’s so much room in the jam community for expansion,” he says. “Because it was just these two-minute 30-second songs that were just wide open for bigger things to happen.”

Beyond The Neville Brothers, Cyril Neville has lent his rhythms to acts such as Willie Nelson, Ani DiFranco and Bob Dylan, records as a solo artist, and about a decade ago partnered up with Devon Allman to form the Royal Southern Brotherhood blues-rock outfit. In 1979, Ziggy Modeliste joined old tourmates Keith Richards and Ron Wood in The New Barbarians, and went on to record several solo albums for his own label, as well as racking up composer credits for his oft-sampled rhythms.

It’s a unique sound The Meters soaked up from the musicians in their neighbourhood. Modeliste had internalised ‘Smokey’ Johnson, whose syncopated pop and clatter propelled iconic tunes like Professor Longhair’s Big Chief and Earl King’s Trick Bag.

Nocentelli had been in Cosimo Matassa’s studio when guitarists like Edgar Blanchard and Roy Montrell were helping to shape rock’n’roll at its dawn.

“Leo’s in that iconic New Orleans guitar lineage,” says Quint Davis, who caught The Meters live in the Nitecap Lounge days and, as soon as he got the chance, booked them at the very first New Orleans Jazz And Heritage Festival, which he has directed since 1970. “He’s very sophisticated musically, but he’ll go into those riffs that go back to Papoose and Earl King and Snooks Eaglin.”

But, as Davis acknowledges, The Meters innovated, adding a special sauce of their own.

“The Meters really brought a rock sensibility to funk, and a funk sensibility to rock,” he says. “People got knocked on the head by them. They got into the middle of a song and turned it into a different song. They were like mercury.”

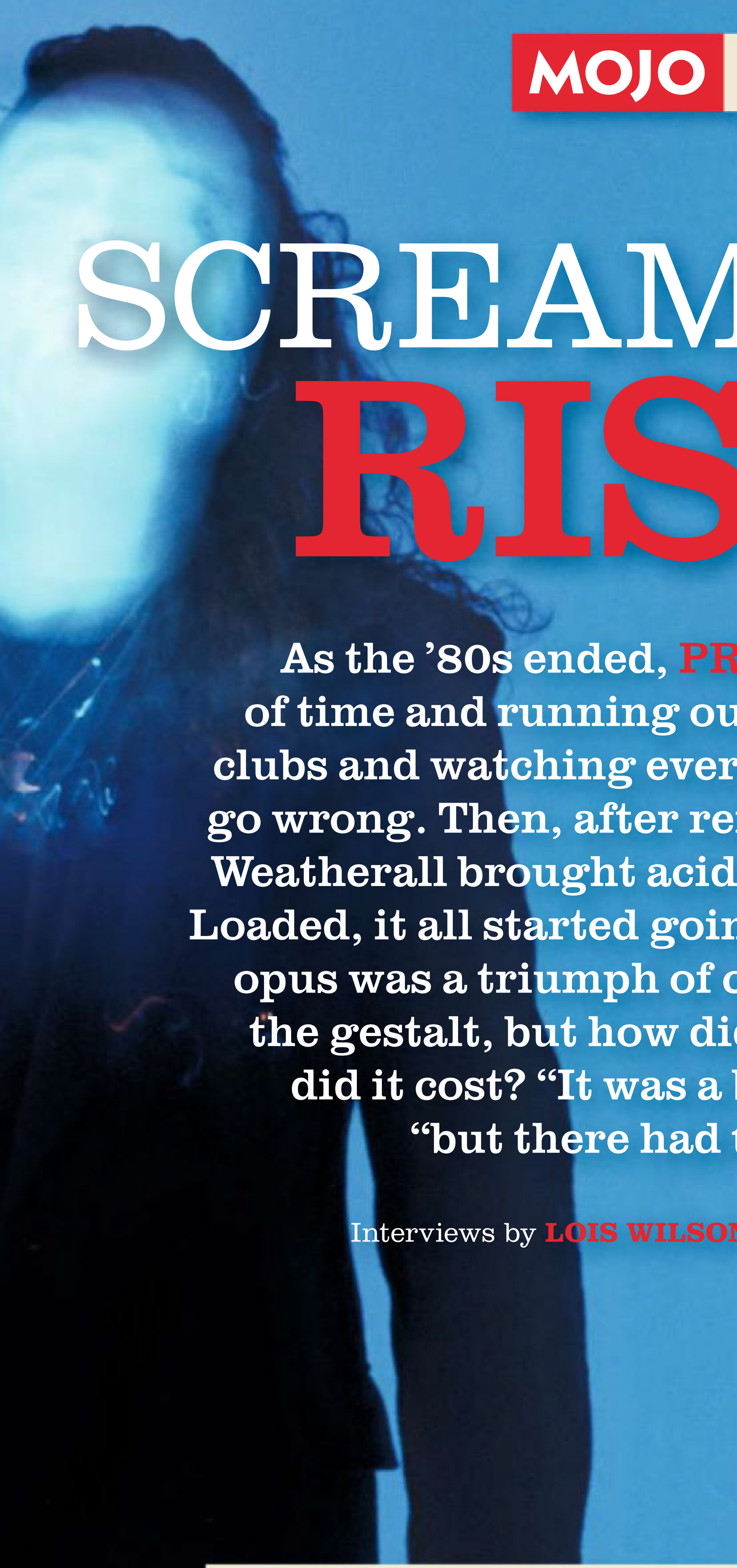
“It was what we did individually as musicians and how we played it off of each other that made everybody take a real interest in what we were doing,” says George Porter Jr. “It wasn’t a single person in the band that stood out, in other words. We functioned together.” Ⓜ

Inner space odyssey: Primal Scream's Bobby Gillespie (centre), Martin Duffy (left) and Robert Young get higher, London, January 1992.

SCREAMADELICA RISING

As the ’80s ended, PRIMAL SCREAM were out of time and running out of road, playing to empty clubs and watching everything that could go wrong, go wrong. Then, after remixer and visionary Andrew Weatherall brought acid house satori with 1990’s hit Loaded, it all started going right. Their 1991 magnum opus was a triumph of collaboration and seizure of the gestalt, but how did they get there? And what did it cost? “It was a beautiful time,” they say, “but there had to be a comedown.”

Interviews by LOIS WILSON • Portrait by TOM SHEEHAN



primal scream
primal scream
screamadelica

Bobby Gillespie: We released the second album [*Primal Scream*] in September 1989. We thought we were a great rock’n’roll band and we gave it our all, but we didn’t sell many records. We went on tour and we were playing Dudley Junction to 20 people. There was a real possibility we’d have to get day jobs. I remember standing in the dole queue and feeling like a complete fucking loser.

Andrew Innes: Andy Weatherall came to review one of our shows [Exeter Arts Centre, September 21, 1989, for NME]. He was the only person who said anything good about us. He had long hair, tattoos, leather trousers – he looked like he could be in the band. When he said he had a signed copy of Thin Lizzy’s *Jailbreak*, we thought, “OK, he’s not just some weird acid house guy.”

Alan McGee: Bobby started going to the clubs, Shoom and Spectrum, although I think it was Innes’s idea to get Weatherall to mix the band. There was no far-reaching plan, we just wanted to hear a Primal Scream record being played in the clubs.

BG: There was a real belief things were changing because of the culture of acid house, because of ecstasy. I felt that moment deeply. It felt that there was a crack in the sky and some light had got in and people were waking up to their true potentiality in terms of being creative, open, socialistic, loving, inclusive. Indie felt solipsistic, grey, dull, unglam, snobbish. The acid scene was open, inclusive, druggy, sexy, glammy. I had to get involved in it and use it, [not] in an exploitative, nasty way, but it was like a new psychedelic era opened. There was a world of possibilities.

AI: The first time Weatherall played Loaded [February 1990’s deconstructed remix of I’m Losing More Than I’ll Ever Have] out at [London’s] Subterania, everyone started doing the Sympathy For The Devil-type “Woo! Woo!”s. Martin Fry and Kevin Rowland were there and said, “Is that your record? It’s great.” There were a few ‘indie traitor’ remarks, but we were transitioning.

➢

Tom Sheehan

PRIMAL SCREAM
PRIMAL COME TOGETHER SCREAM
primal scream
higher than the sun

The harder they come: Bobby Gillespie, August 1990; (right) Gillespie and Denise Johnson heat up The Haçienda, Manchester, 1991; (below right) LP launch, September 1991 (from left) Gillespie, Henry Olsen, Robert Young, Philip 'Toby' Tomanov, Andrew Innes; (insets) '89's *Primal Scream* LP; Come Together and Higher Than The Sun 45s.

"I GOT THE HEADPHONES ON AND COLLAPSED ON THE FLOOR."

Bobby Gillespie

< **AM:** I wanted more of Bobby on Loaded [a Number 16 hit single in March 1990]. Innes said, "Keep out of the records McGee, you're just the fucking manager." Throb [Robert Young, Scream guitar] hated Loaded, he didn't get fully into what they were doing until [August 1990's Number 26 hit] Come Together.

AI: We recorded it in [London's] Jam Studios with a gospel choir. Nicky Brown, the choir leader said, "The girls want to read the lyrics first because they won't sing anything vulgar."

Hugo Nicolson: The first time I met Primal Scream was when they came down to Eden to hear the mix of Come Together and had a crazy party in the lounge, and it turned into bedlam.

BG: In July we got an advance, a couple of thousand, and Andrew had the idea to build a studio, which we did in Hackney. That summer, autumn and winter, me, Robert and Andrew began writing the songs that would become *Screamadelica*, writing on piano, whereas before we wrote on guitar. Robert was into major sevenths, the Carole King/Beach Boys chords… it was a beautiful time, the three of us were incredibly close.

AI: Getting a sampler opened up new ways of constructing. Suddenly you could have tablas, strings, brass, and before that you'd have needed a major label budget.

BG: Come Together got to Number 26 and we followed it up with Higher Than The Sun [Number 40 in June 1991]. When we played it to Alan, he went, "This isn't going to be a hit but we're going to release it anyway because it's a statement, the best fucking record ever made."

Alex Paterson: We were all interconnected. I knew Alan McGee from going to see Chelsea, and my manager Alex Nightingale, who became Primal Scream's manager, gave Innes a copy of [The Orb's November 1990 single] Little Fluffy Clouds. He got it, and they sent me Bobby's vocals for Higher Than The Sun, and then we applied The Orb's ethos to it.

Henry Olsen: A courier brought the DAT of Alex Paterson's mix and I thought, "What a magnificent sound, but are any of us on it?" I really didn't know if it was an Orb record or a Primal Scream record. But it didn't matter. Primal Scream were approaching [Miles Davis's] *In A Silent Way* territory… there was a real sense of anything goes. Denise [Johnson] singing [August '91 single] Don't Fight It, Feel It was a part of that whole thing.

AI: Denise took us to another level. I'd been working with Tony Martin from Hypnotone, he was teaching me how to use the sampler. They were doing a PA and I went to check them out, and Denise was singing live. It was, OK, this is exactly what we need.

HO: Listening to Denise sing wasn't just an aural experience, it resonated with the whole body.

Martin Duffy: Not being confined to working with the band was liberating. We were seeing music as sound, as textures and layers, and we were listening to everything – soul, '60s and '70s out-there jazz, avant-garde classical, experimental electronic music… it was all feeding into what we were creating.

AI: With the exception of Slip Inside This House, which had been done for a 13th Floor Elevators album to raise money for Roky Erickson, we were aiming to make singles that sounded good in clubs. Then McGee said, "You better finish the album." And we were like, "What album?"

BG: Alan booked us into Jam studios in Finsbury Park in summer '91 for three weeks. We were serious about getting the work done. I had missed singing Slip Inside This House because I'd hammered myself bad. I got to the studio from Brighton, got the headphones on and collapsed on the floor. You can hear me in the middle going "trip, trip, trip". Robert did the rest. I wasn't doing that again.

AI: The sessions at Jam ended abruptly. We left the studios on the Friday evening and came back on the Monday morning and the place had been stripped – the grand piano, mixing desk, even the cabling between the rooms, and also our 24-track for Inner Flight. Fortunately, we'd saved all of Henry's fantastic Beach Boys stacked vocals to floppy disc. We finished it at Eden where Weatherall was mixing.

BG: We knew the album would begin with Move On Up and end with Shine Like Stars, and it was then a case of Andrew making it work in terms of mood and arrangement.

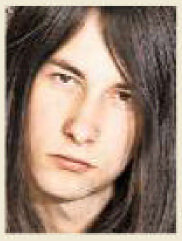
HO: Andy Weatherall and Primal Scream fit like a glove. Weatherall was one of those people who was completely immersed in music all the time.

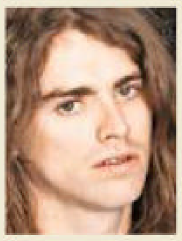
Getty (7), Tom Sheehan, PA, Andrew Catlin, Alamy, Courtesy Hugo Nicolson

THE ORB
LITTLE FLUFFY CLOUDS
primal scream
don't fight it, feel it
primal scream
dixie-narco ep
Roland D-5
HEAD INN

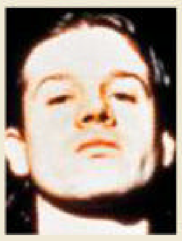
Moving on up: (clockwise from main) Young, Gillespie and Innes, 1991; Andrew Weatherall, "immersed in music"; Bob'n'Throb rock the Barrowlands, Glasgow, October 1991; Innes, Gillespie and Martin Duffy slip inside the Wellhead Inn, Wendover, May 1991; (insets, from top) The Orb's Little Fluffy Clouds; Don't Fight It, Feel It 45; 1992's Dixie-Narco EP.

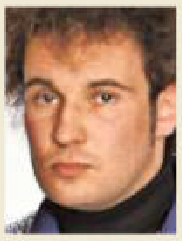
DRAMATIS PERSONAE

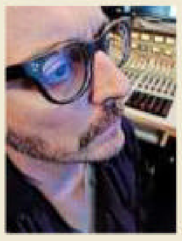

Bobby Gillespie (Primal Scream vocals)

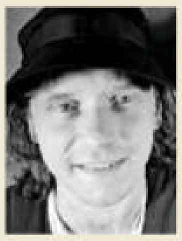

Andrew Innes (Primal Scream guitar)

Alan McGee (Primal Scream manager, Creation label boss)


Martin Duffy (Primal Scream keyboards)


Henry Olsen (Primal Scream bass)


Hugo Nicolson (*Screamadelica* co-producer with Andy Weatherall)


Alex Paterson (The Orb, producer Higher Than The Sun)

He was intuitive and forceful, and of the attitude 'Let's just see where this goes.'

HN: We'd get the multitracks then we'd be, I like this, I like this, I like that, let's get rid of this and that bit, and let's put this beat here, and that bass line there. After Loaded, the gloves were off. Andy could do whatever he liked, and my attitude was to take the tracks as far away from the originals as possible, and make them as out there as possible.

AI: You always wanted your bit to be a bit louder than everyone else's on the record, but you'd get a track back from Weatherall and find you're not even on it! You couldn't be egotistical.

AM: Once we had the acid house tracks done we needed a producer for the rock ones. I said, "You're obsessed with the Stones, I know Jimmy Miller, let's get Jimmy Miller", and fucking hell, it was as brilliant a match as Weatherall. He was a legendary fuck-up, but he came good for a second time with Primal Scream. He nailed Damaged and Movin' On Up. Then we got Paul Cannell to do the artwork, a great guy.

AI: I went into Creation one day and upstairs there was a guy with long hair and paint everywhere. I said to McGee, "Who's that?" McGee went, "It's the artist in residence." He'd given him a little space to paint. If Alan liked you, he'd support you.

AM: *Screamadelica* came out in September '91 and made Number 8. More importantly, it was a fucking classic.

AP: The live shows at the time were great. I did a warm-up DJ slot, Weatherall did a slot after, the group played in between. It really worked.

MD: Felt had played with Primal Scream in the late '80s, in these drab, grey indie venues. Then suddenly we were playing shows with a club element to receptive audiences, like we'd gone into Technicolor. We'd always wanted success, to be on Top Of The Pops and have hit singles and be on the front covers of magazines. But it all happened so quick, and, inevitably after going so high, there had to be a comedown.

AI: By '92 we were starting to crash. We were going to clubs and being escorted into back rooms where we sat all night, and the next thing you knew the cleaners were coming in saying, "You've got to go home." You'd not heard a record or danced, you were just getting wasted.

AM: By '92, they were all junkies – not just the band but the people on the peripheries too. It got bad for a while.

HN: They were still touring *Screamadelica* when we went into Roundhouse studios to start recording the follow-up [in September '92]. I was producing, and one thing I hate is when bands romance their heroes, and say things like, well the Stones did smack on this album which I love, and The Velvet Underground did smack on this one which I love, so in order to get to that place, we have to do smack. And that's what Primal Scream did. They were all pretty much smack addicts.

What had been a utopian experience, with *Screamadelica* and with acid house, then got ragged. Coke was king, and for some people smack was king, and they stopped being a gang and it became very selfish. They nicknamed Roundhouse "Brown House", and when we went on tour to Australia [in late '92] I cracked and jumped ship.

HO: It did get chaotic and rudderless. It's a sobering thought, thinking of all the people on that record that have since left us. All these wonderfully talented musicians, Andy Weatherall, Denise Johnson, Robert Young, taken before their time. That is incredibly sad.

AP: It goes to show just how fragile we all are, and how fleeting life can be. They did such great work, and the ones who are left are lucky to still be here.

AI: The turning point was when we decided to make records at 11 in the morning, without having a drink or doing anything beforehand, with [1997 LP] *Vanishing Point*. It took a long time to get creative again, but we did.

For its 30th anniversary, Screamadelica is available now as a 10 x 12-inch single box set and a double-vinyl picture disc. The unreleased collection Demodelica follows on October 15 (Sony).

Here She Comes

LENNY KAYE’s new compendium of rock’s seismic outbursts includes one he helped ignite. In this extract from Lightning Striking, he relives the rise of **PATTI SMITH**, her Group and New York punk: high art amid the low life. “We have our own agenda,” he writes from the eye of the storm, “which is to stay true to ourselves.”

Portrait by **RICHARD E. AARON**.

Climbing the ladder: Patti Smith with Lenny Kaye at CBGB, New York City, April 4, 1975.

Getty

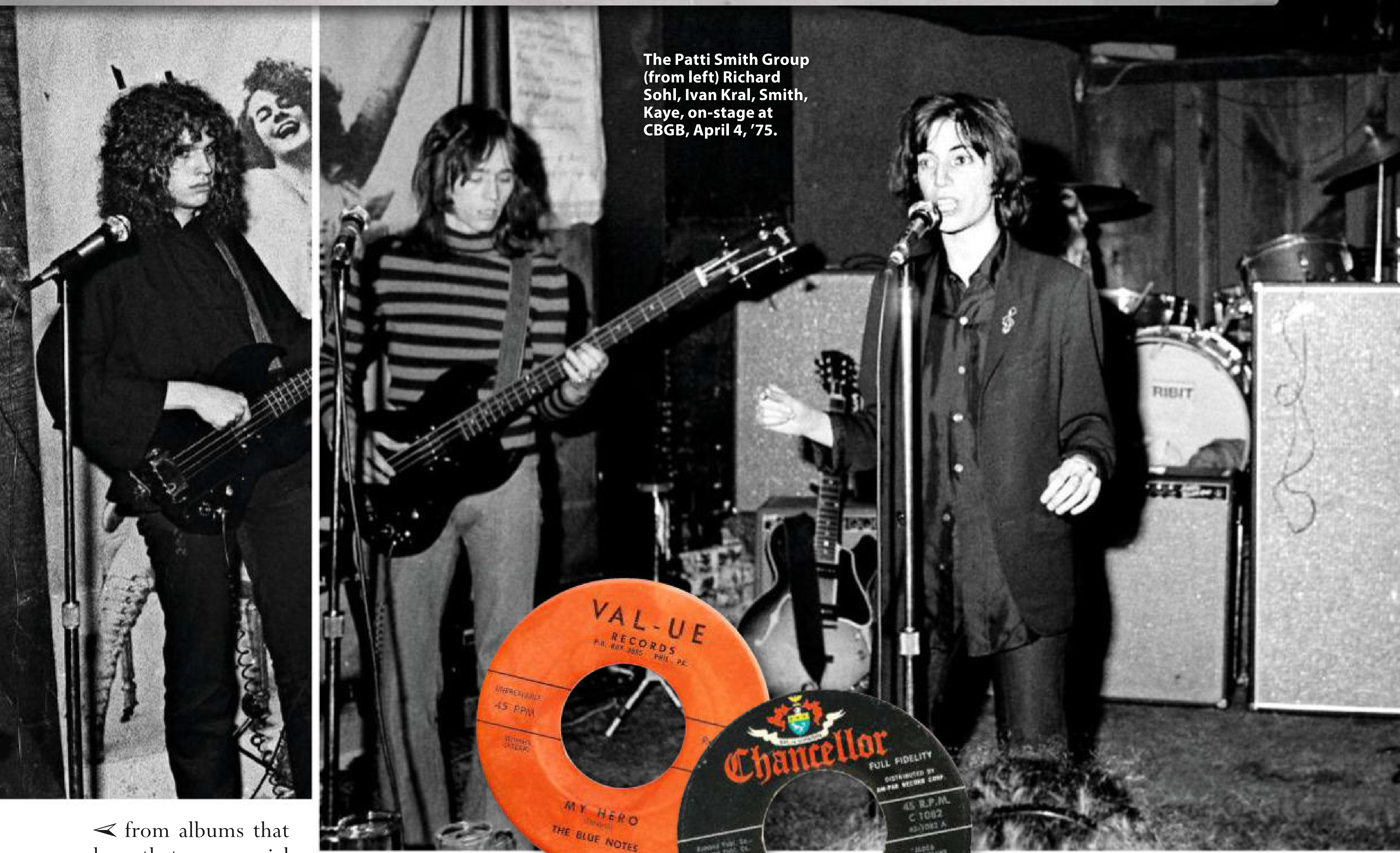
I CAN’T HELP BUT NOTICE HER ON THE INBRED NEW York circuit, sometimes stepping into Max’s Kansas City late at night, or with her boyfriend Robert Mapplethorpe near the Chelsea Hotel. She’s friendly with Steve Paul, impresario of the Scene up on W. 46th St., though he’s shuttered it – the mob wants him to pay protection – by the time I’m ready to enter its afterhours dominion. I’ve gone to witness Pink Floyd there, or Jerry Lee Lewis, but only the early show, before they clear the house for late night hi-jinks.

I’ve seen Patti Smith in a play at the off-off-Broadway La Mama Theater in May 1970, Jackie Curtis’s Femme Fatale. She plays a tough-talking speed freak, all bones and slashed black hair and unfettered attitude, no distance between her role and self. I have an instant crush, and when I watch her and Robert across the room later in Ratner’s, next door to the Fillmore East, a Jewish dairy restaurant that still gives the East Village a *shtetel* flavour, he in fur vest, skull necklace, rockabilly curls, she in the same thin cotton blouse knotted at the midriff she wore in the play, I can only look on in admiration.

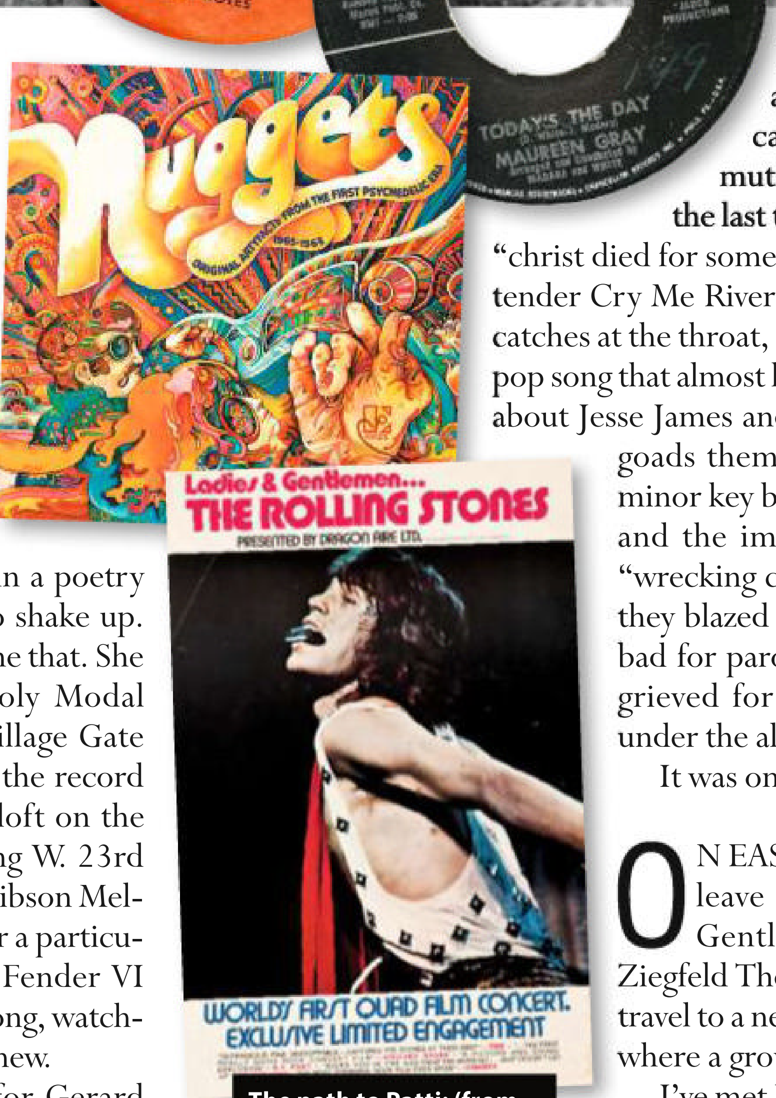
I’M BETWEEN APARTMENTS, LIVING WITH THE WRITERS Richard and Lisa Robinson on the Upper West Side. One day, the phone rings. “Hi,” says a small, almost shy voice, introducing herself. She’s got the number from Steve Paul, to tell me she’s read an article I’ve written – “The Best Of Acappella” – for Jazz & Pop magazine and how it touched her. Patti is from South Jersey, pretty close to my central Jersey, and she knows the music I celebrated, the heartbeat behind it. We both lived close enough to Philadelphia to hear Jerry Blavat on late night radio, The Blue Notes’ My Hero or Maureen Gray’s Today’s The Day. We knew how to do The Strand.

I’ve been working behind the counter at a record store called Village Oldies for Bleecker Bob and Broadway Al for about a year now, 10 dollars a shift and all the records I can filch, rummaging through the stacks to cull cuts that might fit on a compilation called *Nuggets* that Jac Holzman of Elektra has asked me to assemble, ➢

"SHE'D HEARD I PLAYED A LITTLE GUITAR, AND MIGHT I BACK HER IN A POETRY READING AT ST. MARK'S? COULD I DO A CAR CRASH?"



The Patti Smith Group (from left) Richard Sohl, Ivan Kral, Smith, Kaye, on-stage at CBGB, April 4, '75.


VAL-UE RECORDS
MY HERO
THE BLUE NOTES
Chancellor
FULL FIDELITY
TODAY'S THE DAY
MAUREEN GRAY
Nuggets
ORIGINAL ARTYFACTS FROM THE FIRST PSYCHEDELIC ERA
Ladies & Gentlemen...
THE ROLLING STONES
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The path to Patti: (from top) Kaye/Smith's shared influences The Blue Notes and Maureen Gray; Lenny's legendary *Nuggets* compilation; the Stones' concert movie.

≺ from albums that have that one special track. He has a title, and I invent a subtitle, *Original Artyfacts From The First Psychedelic Era*, that defines my own coming of age as a musician and writer, though I don't realise this at the time. I'm still becoming, the history so recent I've only begun to grasp that an era's ended and another is on the way.

After the call, Patti started stopping into the store, sometimes with her sister Linda. I'd put on our shared discography and we'd do the Bristol Stomp when things got quiet. One night she came in with a strange request. She'd heard I played a little guitar, and might I back her in a poetry reading at St. Mark's Church she wanted to shake up. Could I do a car crash? Free jazz had taught me that. She was hanging out with playwright and Holy Modal Rounder drummer Sam Shepard at the Village Gate who suggested she might recruit the guy at the record store across the street. I went over to her loft on the second floor over the Oasis Bar, overlooking W. 23rd St., bringing my Fender Champ amp and a Gibson Melody Maker, the last equipment I had left after a particularly larcenous summer (O! Where is my Fender VI now?). She chanted poems and I followed along, watching how she breathed. Simple chords, all I knew.

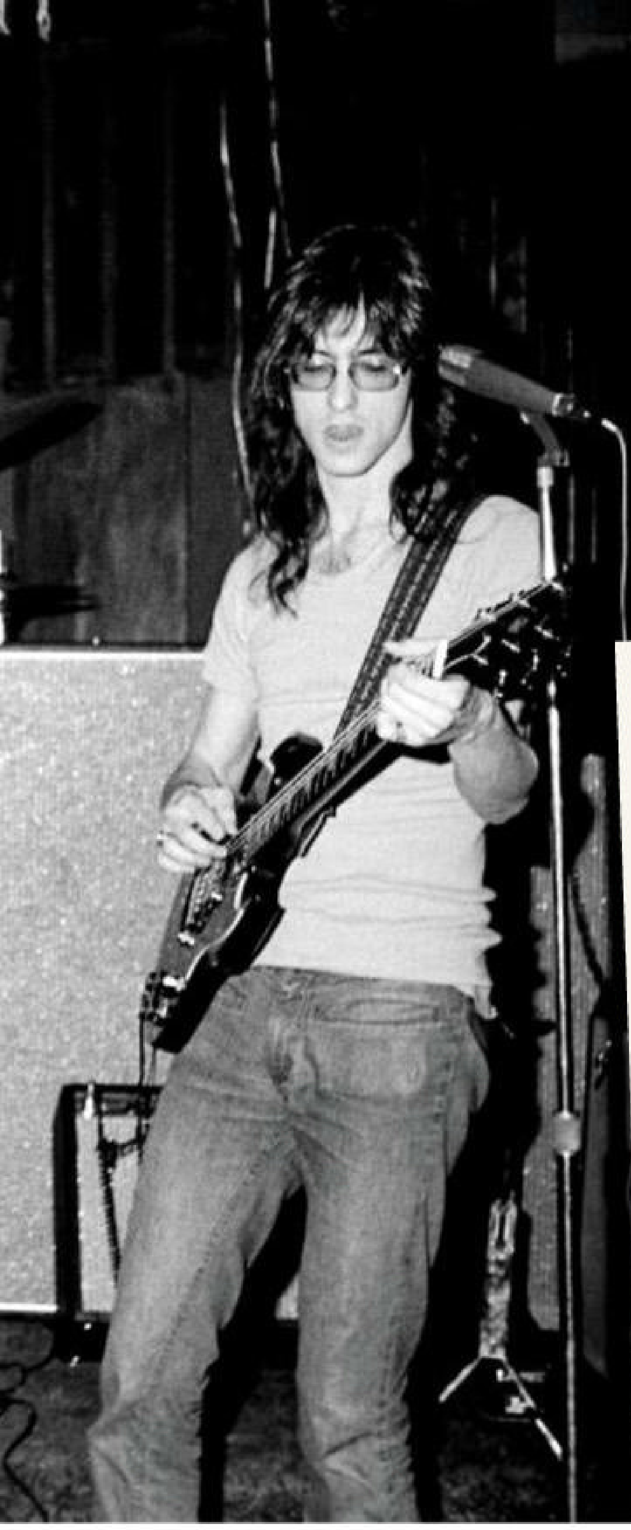
On February 10, 1971, Patti opened for Gerard Malanga at the weekly Wednesday reading sponsored by the Poetry Project at St. Mark's Church. Being Bertolt Brecht's birthday, we began with Mack The Knife: Lotte Lenya and Lenny. Patti dedicates the night to "all that is criminal, the great pit of babel… the petty thief, the whores of mexico… the rhythms of prison, the pirate saint, the masters of russian roulette…" and reads poems typed out feverishly on her red Remington, finding swagger in words and imagery that don't have time for capitals, that proclaim arrival and a mutinous seize of the helm. It won't be the last time I will hear Oath's opening line of "christ died for somebody's sins but not mine." There is a tender Cry Me River for Robert and her sister Linda that catches at the throat, and then the music. We offer a quasi-pop song that almost has a chorus – Picture Hanging Blues, about Jesse James and Billy The Kid and the woman who goads them into a duel over her; a languorous minor key blues called Fire Of Unknown Origin; and the immolation of Ballad Of A Bad Boy, "wrecking cars is my art… fenders hot as angels they blazed inside me… that boy is evil he's too bad for parole… his mama killed him, his papa grieved for him, his little sister annalea wept under the almond tree…".

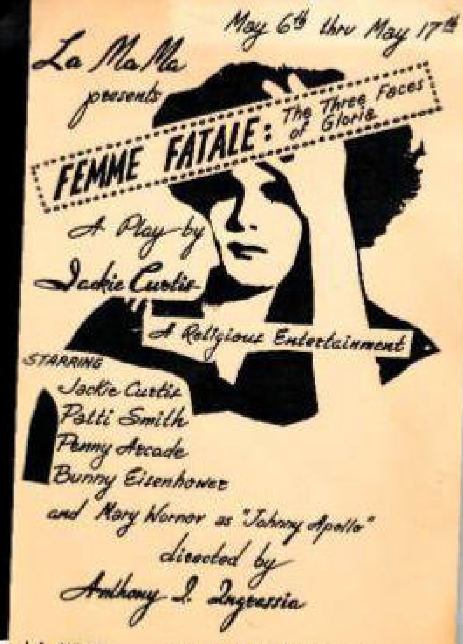
It was only supposed to happen once.

ON EASTER SUNDAY, 1974, PATTI AND I leave a preview screening of Ladies And Gentlemen, The Rolling Stones, at the Ziegfeld Theater on W. 54th St., get in a cab, and travel to a newish hole-in-the-wall on the Bowery where a group called Television is playing.

I've met Richard Lloyd in Max's. He's told me he's a guitarist in a group called Crossfire, and so that's how I nickname him, even though he's now joined Television. Richard Hell, once Myers, has invited Patti to see his band, also Television. They're playing Sunday nights on the Bowery. I've never been to CBGB – initialled for Country, Bluegrass, and Blues – but they've convinced the owner, Hilly Krystal, to let them have a stage

Eyevine, Photo by Allan Tannenbaum/Getty Images, Getty (2)





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Raw power: Patti keeps Iggy close, Los Angeles, November 1974; (left from top) off-off-Broadway Femme Fatale, co-starring Smith; with photographer Robert Mapplethorpe, Max's Kansas City, May 18, 1978.

once a week, on Sunday nights after Ed Sullivan. Come on down.

We're a band as well. Sort of. Actually, we're more suited to the folk circuit and cabaret, now a trio with Richard Sohl on piano, the first keyboard player who looks as if he might last more than one gig. As we merry-go-round the Metro and back again to Reno Sweeney's, our set takes on contour. Patti declaims her poetry, we segue into song, and then she sings her poetry, making it up as she goes along. Richard and I follow her persona-shifting, up volume, down volume, slowing, speeding, dark, light. She is learning to be a singer. Sandy Pearlman had asked her after the St. Mark's reading if she wanted to sing with Blue Öyster Cult. Steve Paul similarly offered his Blue Sky record imprint and possible collaborators. But Patti is just beginning to see how to make it her own.

We are aware of the effect we're having on an audience, not just localised friends and hangers-on, but curiosity seekers won over and mesmerised though they – like us – aren't quite sure why. Writing and performance, Patti understands both; her poems clear, accessible, funny, sexy, shocking, redemptive, and then she inhabits them. It is uncanny to watch the audience fall under her spell, hypnotically following a trail of thought as she spirals outward, and then reels the tangent back to earth to reprise a final chorus.

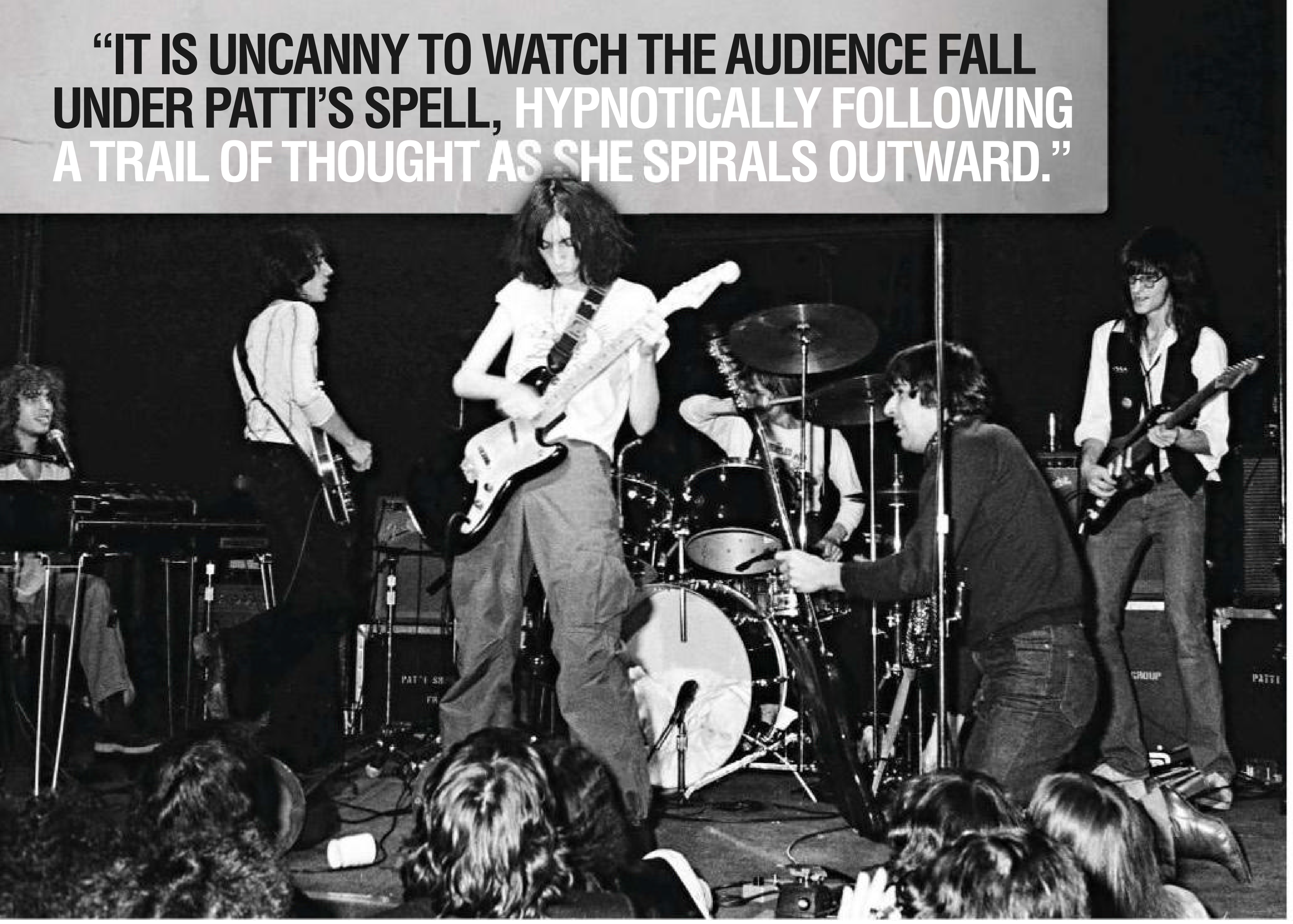
We're practising almost every day, up four flights of stairs behind a movie billboard on the west side of Times Square at 46th St., in an empty office down the hall from our manager Jane Friedman's PR firm, Wartoke Concern. There is a piano there, and we spend afternoons trying out songs we like: Smokey Robinson's The Hunter Gets Captured By The Game, Bessie Smith's I'm Wild About That Thing, The Velvet Underground's We're Gonna Have A Real Good Time Together, and those we're beginning to write. Richard has a moody keyboard piece we call the Harbor Song. Picture Hanging Blues has taken on formal structure and Ballad Of A Bad Boy closes our set with enough noise to declare our intentions. We set to music Piss Factory, Patti's escape from South Jersey as metaphor and mission: "james brown singing I lost someone/georgie woods the guy with the goods and guided missiles". Richard gives it a rolling underlay, and I jazz along.

ON JUNE 5 WE BOOK A SESSION AT ELECTRIC LADY Studios to see what we sound like on a record, with its own imbalanced relationship, where you sing to yourself and hope it's heard beyond the microphone. I've been dabbling in record production, tried my hand with a Boston band called the Sidewinders signed to RCA. Robert Mapplethorpe stakes us to the tune of a thousand dollars and we're ready to press play.

It's 9pm in Studio B of Electric Lady, in the back, 8-track, and we won't use all of them. Five years before, Patti was sitting on the stairs of the newly-opened W. 8th St. recording studio designed by Jimi Hendrix, in the space where a hoedown club called the Village Barn sub-basemented since 1930, too shy to go into the party, when Jimi walked up the stairs, on his way out the door, off to the Isle Of Wight, not much more lifeline left. He told her of his dream of an abstract universal musical language, beyond key and tempo. Now we're attempting to crack its code. Because Richard and I are key and tempo, we bring Television's Tom Verlaine with us to provide abstraction. "Hi Jimi," Patti whispers into the microphone before we begin his slowed version of Hey Joe (through Tim Rose) that we are attaching to Patti's poem, now called 60 Days: "Sixty days ago she was just a little girl/And now here she is with a gun her hand." When it's Tom's turn, we encourage him to spiral as far outré as he can go, mixing his two takes together for a maelstrom of double helix. With 15 minutes left in the three-hour session, Patti recites Piss Factory, me and Sohl tap-dancing beneath her, emphasising the "never return and I will travel light" and the "be somebody", which, at least in recorded form, we are now. At midnight, Tom and Patti take a ride on the Staten Island Ferry, marrying our bands.

At the end of July I drive to Philadelphia to pick up 1,500 copies of Mer 601, black label 7-inch with silver print, a small swan as ➢

“IT IS UNCANNY TO WATCH THE AUDIENCE FALL UNDER PATTI’S SPELL, HYPNOTICALLY FOLLOWING A TRAIL OF THOUGHT AS SHE SPIRALS OUTWARD.”



≺ logo. The disc is slightly pie-plated, and I can tell by looking sideways at its rim that the pressing plant has used recycled vinyl, its greyish tinge a clue to tell the original from future bootlegs. By August it resides on Max’s upstairs jukebox, where Piss Factory seems to be a hit, where we will begin, on the 28th, a one-week extended-to-two stand with Television as co-headliners. It speaks to our – and their – escalating audience, many well-meaning friends but also those drawn by word-of-mouth, or the not-so-underground press (the Soho Weekly News and the Village Voice, and national publications like Creem), or the records we’ve dropped off at bookstores and record stores, never getting around to pick up the proceeds, or Patti’s ability to hypnotise both herself and the audience.

OUR MANHATTAN-CENTRIC REPUTATION HAS grown to the point where our “Rock And Rimbaud III”, held in the incongruous tiki-bar setting of the Hotel Roosevelt’s Blue Hawaii Room up by Grand Central Station, has a line wrapped around the block in early November of 1974. The virtuoso guitarist Sandy Bull opens for us, accompanying Patti on the oud for All The Hipsters Go To The Movies. We kick off with another Hank Ballard song, Let’s Go, Let’s Go, Let’s Go and have added new craftings still figuring out destinations: Free Money, beamed to her, as Patti says, when she looked into the ice blue eyes of a Husky dog; Birdland, a poem derived from the Peter Reich memoir of his orgone-proselytising father Wilhelm being taken from him by extraterrestrial visitation; and a version of the archetypal Gloria that began when Richard Hell sold us his Danelectro bass for 40 dollars. Patti strapped it on, hit a low E note and as it vibrated, intoned the opening lines of Oath: “christ died for somebody’s sins but not mine.” There is only one song that can be communioned with, and I’d been playing it since 1966: Gloria, *in excelsis deo*.

We leave for our first official road trip the next morning, on our way to California. Jane Friedman has booked us a week at the Whisky-a-Go-Go, opening for a band called Fancy from England that has a one-hit wonder with a remake of Wild Thing, and then a trip up to San Francisco. While the dressing room overlooking Sunset is filled with various well-wishing Stooges and garage-rock aficionados who scrawl *Standells* on the wall, and the shows go over well, myself and Richard are straining to keep up with the way the songs are developing; to pace Patti’s sense of headlong discovery of who she can be. She’s singing more, enjoying the room she has to move on stage, and we’re hearing the need for another musician, overtone and scaffold. When we land in the Bay Area, we debut in a record store – Rather Ripped – in Berkeley, play a club called the Longbranch with Eddie Money, and finish our run on a Tuesday audition night at Winterland. Jonathan Richman of The Modern Lovers sits in on drums during our set (I’m exasperatingly out of tune throughout, in these last moments before guitar tuners are invented): Gloria, Piss Factory, and Land. He’s our first percussion, though we’re not ready for that yet. We’re looking for a bridge.

Back in the practice room in mid-December, we sift through the guitarists who have come to audition from our classified casting call in the Village Voice. On the third day, as we’re despairing of finding someone suitable, Ivan Kral comes by. A Czech refugee with a Kafkaesque moodiness and a love of The Beatles and The Rolling Stones, he has an appealing accent, good bone structure and haircut, and plays bass and guitar. When we embark on Gloria he resolutely follows, unflinching, steadfast, and we realise how other guitarists altered our approach. Ivan enlarges it, so we still sound like ourselves.

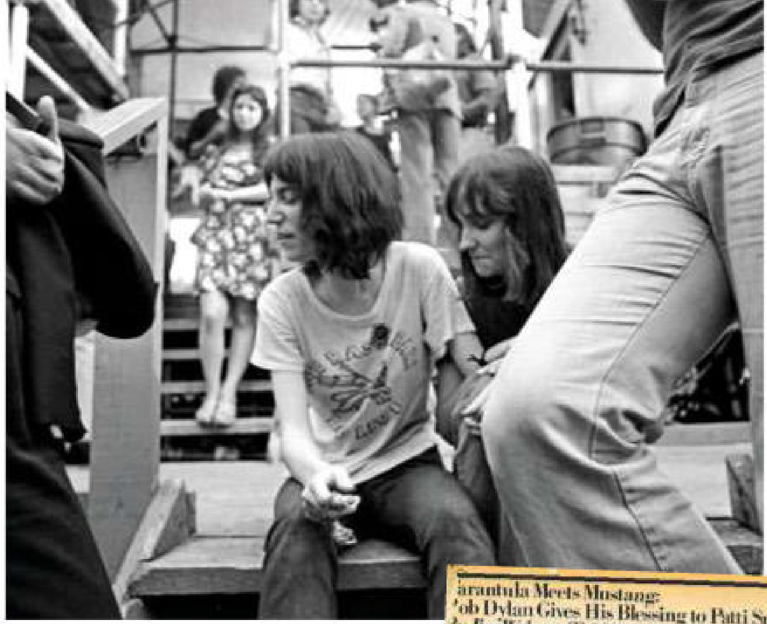
JANE BOOKS US A GIG AT THE MAIN POINT OUTSIDE Philadelphia, opening for Eric Burdon, our first as a quartet, and then we move into CBGB, two sets a night, swapping turns on stage with Television. We bring our art-crowd to CBGB, and the club starts to fill, gathering momentum beyond the bands and their followings. The night-after-night allows us freedom to explore, to embark on patient journeys within the songs – especially those with a story to tell. Each night takes on individual sheen, to see what Patti can draw from the shimmering air and the silence that comes over the room when she begins to dreamscape.

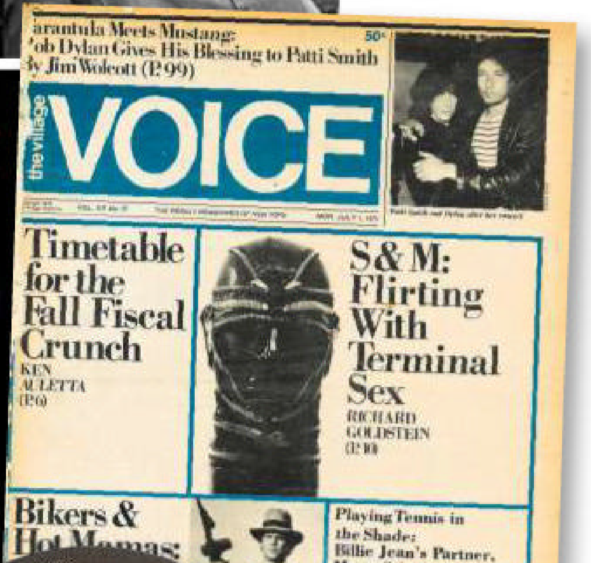
We have new songs, and with the expanded line-up we can enhance them. Redondo Beach is a poem from Patti’s small-press book Kodak, set to a reggae beat. Distant Fingers is an imagined song title from Nick Tosches, who writes a semi-fictional profile of Patti for Penthouse and cites that as one of her hits. Break It Up, from a dream Patti has of Jim Morrison rising from his grave, is enhanced by Tom Verlaine’s guitar aviary. Kimberly grows from a Booker T. And The M.G.’s riff into a backdrop for the cataclysmic birth of Patti’s youngest sister.

Off-stage is a record contract, and there is interest. ESP-Disk

Getty (3), Alamy

Smith with Tom Verlaine (left) before a performance at City Centre, NYC, September 21, 1975; (opposite) a kneeling John Cale roadies for Patti at the Bottom Line, NYC, December 28, 1975. The band now has a drummer, too.





arantula Meets Mustang:
'ob Dylan Gives His Blessing to Patti Smith
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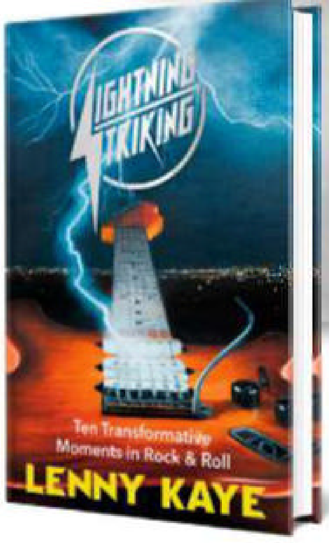


Patti Smith Horses

offers its universal language (it was begun as an Esperanto label), and though tempting to be on the same roster as Albert Ayler, The Fugs, Pearls Before Swine, Patty Waters, and Sun Ra, we do have a mainstream streak. RCA Victor gives us an in-house audition, but before they have a chance to make up their querulous minds, Clive Davis of newly-founded Arista Records comes to CBGB. He knows of Patti, has just begun a label that needs a maverick presence; he also respects performance, and believes an artist must give all and more on stage, regardless of where they slot on the pop spectrum. All we ask is creative freedom. Signed. By the end of our April stay at CBGB, they're turning people away over weekends.

In June 1975, CBGB sound system supervisor and Mumps drummer Jay Dee Daugherty joins us in the practice room, and is made official when we play the Other End on June 26, the Bleecker Street folk mecca, once the Bitter End. In the audience is the prime number of the Village folk scene, the infidel Bob Dylan. He comes backstage, is photographed joking with Patti, an acknowledge that we are going electric at last, a rock'n'roll band, as we always desired, on our own terms.

WE SPEND THAT SUMMER INDUCTING JAY DEE INTO our midst, though the adjustment goes both ways. We are used to blurring the beat, slowing and accelerating and staggering. He is the beat. It's not all we'll have to get used to. Keeping tempo in the upcoming recording sessions will be our choice of producer, John Cale, picked for artistic sensibility, radical edge, confrontation and urban chaos. He will forcefully be all that, though we have our own agenda, which is to stay true to ourselves.

He's never heard our music, and so we take him to the Joyous Lake in Woodstock to show what we can do. On the way up, in my red '64 Chevy Impala, we listen to reggae, an accompanying soundtrack.

Horse whisperers: (left, from top) Smith backstage at Central Park, NYC, with sister Kimberley, July 9, 1976; Village Voice reveals Bob Dylan's benediction on Patti; with label boss/Arista founder Clive Davis; Smith's first single, on Mer; her *Horses* album; Kaye's new book.

"That sounds like Radio Ethiopia," says John, fulfilling a producer's job of paving a path ahead even while the present is yet to be accomplished.

On September 2, we move our equipment into Electric Lady's Studio A. Interstellar space murals surround us, the recording chamber lit by the glowing dials of the control room with its navigational mixing board, like the prow of a solar ship. We're on the night shift, arriving after dark and staying 'til the sky lightens. As the clock tolls 12, we press play on Gloria, try our hand at Redondo Beach. Begun.

Early on, we had to decide how much of a record to make: ie. to layer and edit and cross-fade in the quest to represent a perfect illusion of a live performance, or try to catch the incandescence-in-a-bottle that is live performance on the fly, a document as it happens in the moment, as if you are there. "As if" is the tricky part.

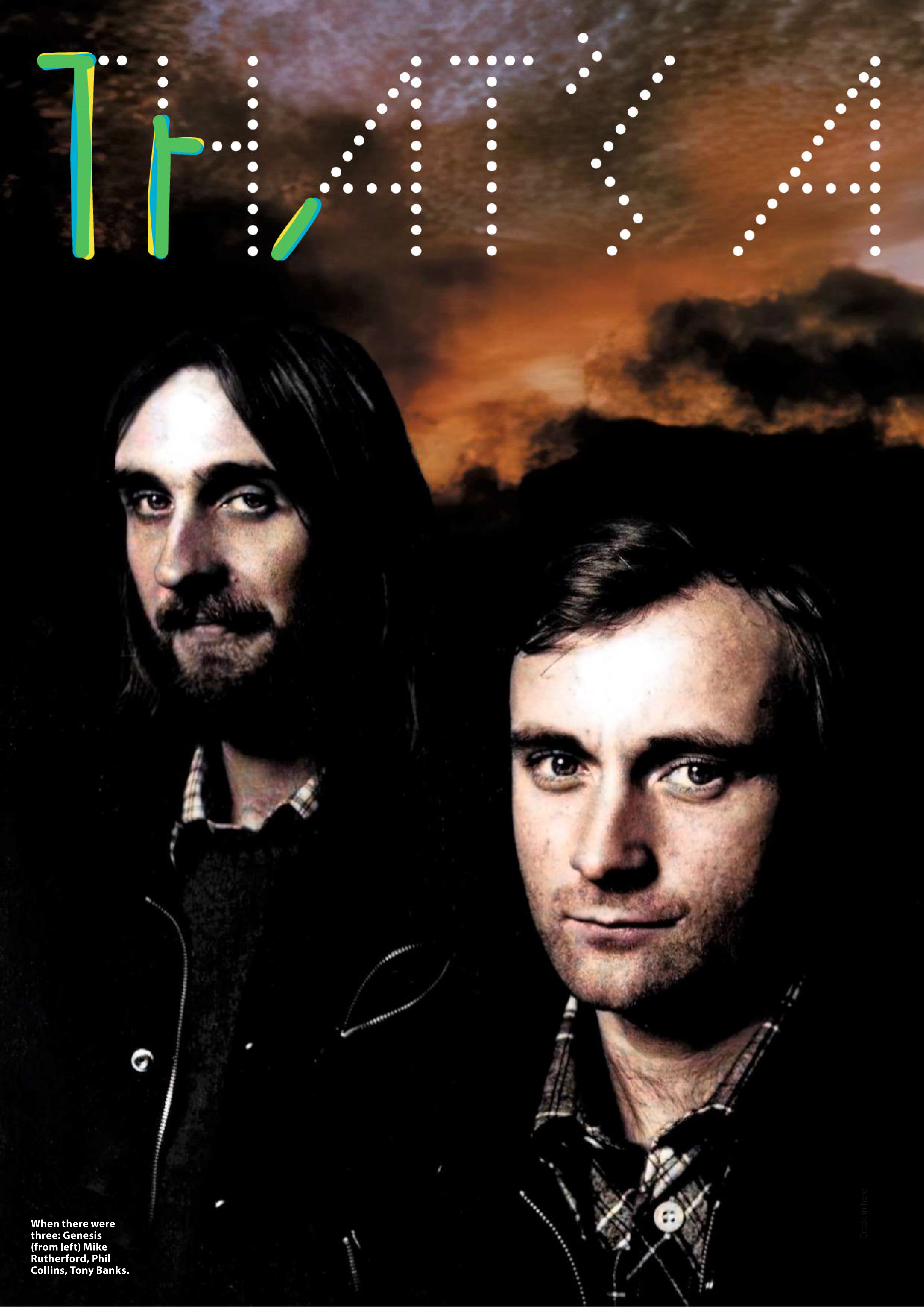
The best records can be both. We were determined to keep free-style improvisation at the forefront for songs that called for it. Our more structured material, like Redondo Beach, Free Money, Break It Up, even Gloria itself, which had evolved into a sculpted arrangement, could be tracked and overdubbed. Others in our repertoire had little but a starting point. We wanted to see where the adrenal energy of songs like Land and Birdland might voyage as they took flight in a room with science fictional murals of space travel on the walls. "There's a little place/A place called space," sang Patti, as we made ready to explore the cosmos.

There is a narrative arc to *Horses*, a vision called forth in the album's making, enhanced by the presence of Jimi's ghost in Electric Lady, its spectral appearance at the end of Land, lying "between the sheets" following "a long Fender whine to a sweet young thing humping on the parking meter leaning on the parking meter," returning to the start of the record as if asking to be played again. Elegie, a memorial tribute to Hendrix, music written by Blue Öyster Cult's Allen Lanier, closes the album, the departed remembered and honoured, and an acknowledgment of the long line of rock'n'roll chronology in which we had somewhat presumptuously placed ourselves. We had wanted Chet Baker to play a trumpet solo over its coda, but were unable to afford the fee his manager asked. Some things are best left to the imagination.

As mixing and final touches to *Horses* spilled over into October, we ran out of studio time. The record was due out in America on November 10, the passing day of Arthur Rimbaud. I remember waking at two in the morning to head to Electric Lady, working until the next session was due in, then trying to catch a few hours sleep.

On the morning of October 11, we mixed a final version of Redondo Beach. As dawn broke over Lower Manhattan, we walked up the stairs, out of the studio, into the future. Ⓜ

Lightning Striking by Lenny Kaye is published by White Rabbit on November 16.



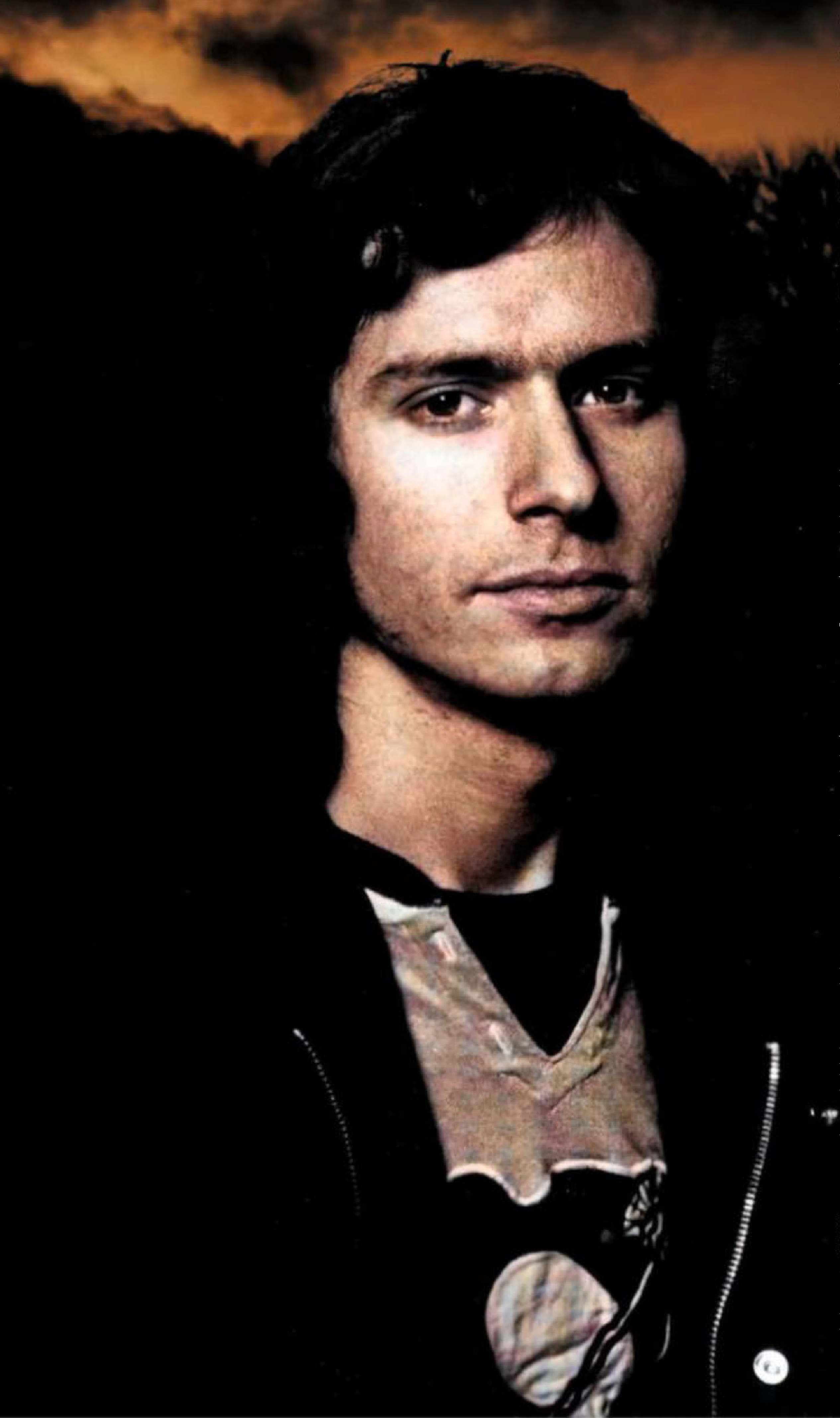
When there were three: Genesis (from left) Mike Rutherford, Phil Collins, Tony Banks.

Credit in here

LL?

GENESIS'S autumn megatour is likely their last. But stranger things have happened in their 50-plus years – like surviving the loss of a far-out frontman and their metamorphosis into prog-pop chart subversives. Proof of the power of three? "I don't think anybody thought Peter leaving was the end," they tell TOM DOYLE.

Photograph: Aubrey Powell



HEADPHONES ON, SURROUNDED by drums, Phil Collins is in his happy place. It is May 22, 1975, at the Palais Des Sports de Besançon in eastern France, the final date of the Genesis tour where the five-piece have been playing their double album, *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway*, in its entirety. A bold move.

It's been a tough seven-month jaunt, with on-screen visual projections regularly breaking down in front of fans often bewildered by the band's new hour-and-a-half long concept LP (unspooling the trippy adventures of a Puerto Rican New Yorker named Rael), but Collins has enjoyed the experience. Some nights, he's even smoked a joint before perching behind his mammoth kit.

"Oh, yeah, I did that occasionally," he says today. "When I put my headphones on, which was the best way to hear myself singing, as well as the band generally, I went off into my own little world."

After tonight, Genesis will lose frontman Peter Gabriel, who is quitting to go solo, tired of the intra-band arguments (between himself and keyboard player Tony Banks in particular). To mark the occasion, Gabriel opens the show by playing The Last Post on his oboe. Bassist (and, later, guitarist) Mike Rutherford remembers that it was an emotional gig for all.

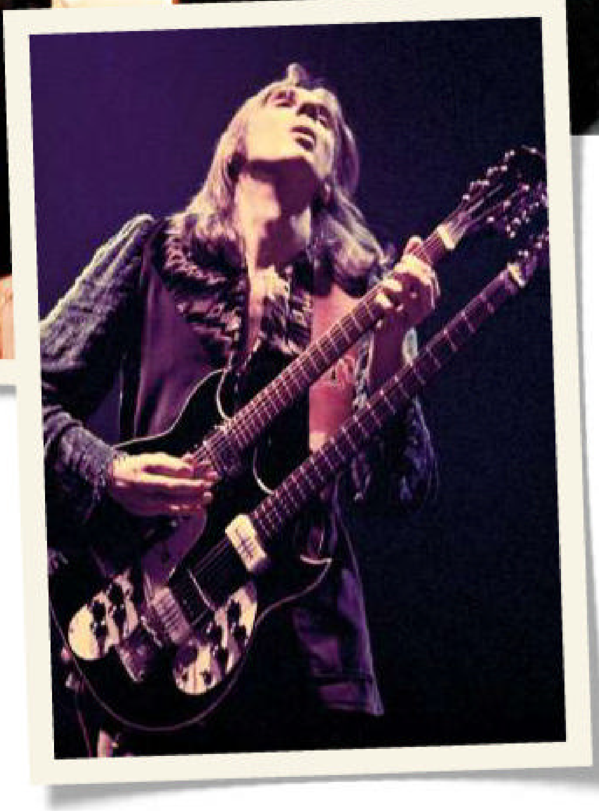
"It was just weird," he says. "You weren't sure what you were feeling. You're going on and you're thinking, 'This is the last one with Peter. What's going to happen next?'"

What happened next was that Collins – until then an enthusiastic backing vocalist who'd take the odd lead from behind his kit – would find himself in the spotlight. Notably, for the band's comeback show, 10 months later, at the London Arena, Ontario, on March 26, 1976.

Very much a drummer at heart, he wasn't entirely happy about this new development. "I wasn't pleased to be a singer," he confirms. "I just did it."

"Seeing Phil up there rather than Peter was kind of a strange moment for me," Tony Banks laughs. "It was almost like a nightmare. Y'know, 'Where's Pete?' And yet as soon as he started talking to the audience, they responded, and his singing was great. The people who'd liked us before seemed to like us still, and that meant we had somewhere to go."

FOUR-AND-A-HALF DECADES ON, PHIL COLLINS is still the singer in Genesis, although he can no longer play drums. Various health problems – but most significantly dislocated neck vertebrae in 2009 leading to spinal surgery in 2015 – have hampered his movements and forced him to pack away his sticks for good. ➢



Nonetheless, although now from a seated position, he is fronting Genesis for their first shows since 2007, on the teasingly-named The Last Domino? arena tour of Ireland, the UK, Canada and the US. While Collins had announced his retirement in 2011, he returned to touring his solo material six years later, with his son Nic replacing him behind the kit. "Tony and Mike both came to see my show at the Albert Hall," he tells MOJO, "and were blown away by Nic. And they thought, 'Hang on, we could do this if Nic plays drums.'"

Then, in January 2020, the three members of Genesis were spotted together at a basketball game in Madison Square Garden. The official word was that the three were in Manhattan attending the wedding of a friend; in truth they'd begun exploratory rehearsals with the 19-year-old Nic Collins and long-time (since 1977) live guitarist Daryl Stuermer. "Sort of rehearsing to see if we wanted to rehearse," as Collins puts it.

"Nic's a versatile drummer," say Banks. "He's able to sound a lot like Phil did back when he was the same sort of age as Nic is now. And, y'know, that's very exciting for us."

All three, however, say there was never a moment this time around when they considered trying to reform the '70s quintet that featured Gabriel and guitarist Steve Hackett.

"I'm sure Steve wouldn't take too much persuading," says Banks. "But Peter is kind of a little bit difficult in that way (*laughs*). Before we did the last reunion thing [in 2007], we did vaguely talk with Peter, and it obviously wasn't going to go anywhere.

"I mean, in a way, I'd love to do it," he adds. "But it's difficult now because Phil can't play the drums. So you could never get the real old band together the way we did it before."

The Last Domino? reunion dates – the first Genesis shows since January 1977 not to feature tour drummer Chester Thompson – were announced at the beginning of March 2020, only weeks before the first UK lockdown, meaning the dates have been twice rescheduled. In October of last year, full-scale production rehearsals were staged at LH2 Studios in Park Royal, west London, even though it was clear that the tour would be delayed.

"We thought," says Rutherford, "'Why are we rehearsing when we haven't got a tour? Should we just wait and see?' But we all felt that if we didn't get it ready, we might have come to this year and gone, 'D'you know what, guys? This is not meant to be.' So, I think the fact we rehearsed and got the show going was a very good move."

The 2021 Genesis – as evidenced by new 27-track compilation *The Last Domino?* – still dip back into the Gabriel era, whether it be with the muted anthem Carpet Crawlers from *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway* or their very first hit, the Beatles-ish I Know What I Like (In Your Wardrobe) from 1973's *Selling England By The Pound*. The full 23-minute, seven-movement version of Supper's Ready from '72's *Foxtrot*, however, is out. "We did vaguely consider it on this tour," Banks admits. "But it just takes up too much of the show, y'know. If a quarter of the show is one song, then you're kind of very limited to what else you can do."

THE 1975 RIFT WAS A MOMENT of real danger for Genesis, but in fact established an equilibrium within the band that would carry them through the '80s and into the 1990s, yield extraordinary sales, and take them from theatres to arenas to stadiums. By contrast, the combination of Gabriel, Banks and Rutherford – thrust together at Charterhouse public school in Godalming, Surrey – had been prone to *Sturm und Drang*.

"They were very highly strung guys," says Collins, who joined the band in 1970, by which time they'd already released two albums (1969's *From Genesis To Revelation*, 1970's *Trespass*). "I think Steve Hackett put it best when he said it was like, suddenly, out of nowhere, someone would say, 'You stole my protractor.' I mean, Peter and Tony were the closest of friends at school, and yet the worst of enemies."

"We had our turbulent moments," Banks accepts. "Peter and I were always the best of friends, but we did fight quite a lot."

"We were always serious about music," says Rutherford. "We were just intense young men, really."

After Gabriel quit, the others had no hesitation in moving forward without him. "I don't remember anything other than resil-

Getty (3)

Pensive and apprehensive: Collins, Banks and Rutherford driving off into the future; (left, from top) the four-piece of Collins, Rutherford, Steve Hackett and Banks, August 18, 1975; Collins, Banks and Rutherford on-stage in the '70s.

> "Seeing Phil up there was a strange moment. It was almost like a nightmare. Y'know, 'Where's Pete?'"
>
> Tony Banks

ience," says Collins. "I don't think anybody thought that was the end. It was, 'That was the end of *that*.' There was a decision to carry on, made by all of us."

Initially, the drummer suggested that Genesis could perhaps continue as a purely instrumental band, much like the other group he was playing in at the time, jazz fusion outfit Brand X. "But that was shouted down straight away," he recalls.

"I think Tony went, 'Don't be so silly,'" says Rutherford. "Which I agreed with. We needed words."

"The songs were really important to us," says Banks. "It was just a question of finding a singer."

Placing a music paper small ad seeking "a Genesis-type singer", the band auditioned possible candidates. One, Mick Strickland, seemed a likely contender and a session was duly booked to record him at Trident Studios in Soho in the autumn of '75. Strickland stepped up to the mike and first attempted to add his vocal to Genesis's new, Zeppelin-style rocker, Squonk.

"It was not in the right key for him," remembers Collins. "And we didn't consider that kind of thing at that point, about whether it was the right key for the singer (*laughs*). He left after having given his best. And I said, 'Let me have a go, 'cos I might be able to do this one.'

"I went down and started singing, and everybody gave the thumbs-up from the control room. And so we just kept going, and one by one, knocked the songs off. Even then, I wasn't sure whether I would be doing it, or wanted to do it."

The resulting Collins-sung album, 1976's *A Trick Of The Tail*, was a triumph, echoing the folky prog of their earlier albums and emboldening the new line-up by charting at Number 3 in the UK (where *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway* had tottered to Number 10). Only 10 months later, Genesis followed it up with the comparatively weaker *Wind & Wuthering*, which saw Tony Banks taking more creative control.

"It was in some ways our most musically ambitious album," Banks argues in its defence. "Some people felt it was a bit more difficult by comparison. But that was what Genesis was supposed to be… a slightly difficult group."

"It's Tony's favourite album and not mine," says Rutherford. "I think it's a more female album. There's some good stuff, but I think a few bits didn't work."

Collins is equally ambivalent, squirming at the memory of being asked to sing Banks's All In A Mouse's Night, detailing the manoeuvres of an intrepid rodent ("Think I might go out for a stroll/Into the night and out of this hole").

"I still don't know how I did that with a straight face," he chuckles. "But, y'know, it was my lot to sing it. I drew the short straw and had to do it."

By the time of *Wind & Wuthering*'s release at the end of 1976, punk was threatening the relevance of Genesis. Nonetheless, the members claim to being largely unaware they were fast becoming regarded as the "enemy".

"We probably spent about three months in America on tour that year," says Rutherford. "Of course, in those days news didn't travel so well. It went over my head, really."

"I religiously went out and bought all the music papers every week," says Collins. "So, I was *kind* of aware. But I mean, I didn't like the bands that they didn't like either." ➢

Surprisingly, Banks saw punk as an opportunity for Genesis: “We were a sort of dinosaur band, but it worked for us in a way. If you wanted to listen to stuff with a bit more kind of complexity, then we were the most obvious band, I suppose. So, it played into our hands.”

In March of 1977, Peter Gabriel launched his solo career, immediately scoring a Number 13 hit with Solsbury Hill, while Genesis were struggling in the singles charts. A bit annoying?

“There was obviously a bit of a friendly rivalry there,” Banks admits. “But I really liked a lot of his stuff. I had no real problem with it while we were doing OK. If we’d fallen by the wayside and done nothing, I might have been peeved.”

THE FIRST EVIDENCE THAT Genesis could move beyond prog into hits came with their ninth studio album, *...And Then There Were Three...*, in 1978. As its title suggested, the band were now reduced to what would become the core trio, after Steve Hackett left, frustrated at having to fight tooth and nail for his songs to be included. Rutherford, who moved to replace him as guitarist, reckons Hackett may have jumped too soon.

“I felt it could’ve been avoidable,” he says. “Later on, we proved in the best way ever that you can do the band and the solo stuff at the same time. He’d just gone too early.”

As a pared-down unit, the band worked more efficiently and with fewer disagreements. For instance, quietly hypnotic love ballad Follow You Follow Me, Genesis’ first UK Top 10 hit, was written by Rutherford in just 10 minutes.

“Then I spent two days checking it, thinking, ‘I’ve got it wrong. It can’t be that easy,’” he says. “It’s funny because it was a soft song, but it wasn’t too sweet. It surprised us too. We’d been releasing singles for years and never got very far.”

For the writing of *Duke* (1980), with Collins going through a grim divorce, the three set up in the master bedroom of his empty house in the Surrey village of Shalford. The singer was temporarily freed from his drumming responsibilities by the use of a Roland CR-78 CompuRhythm beatbox, and the songs –generally more concise and focused – flowed.

“That was when we re-found ourselves as a band, co-writing,” says Rutherford. “Because Phil started writing a lot as well.”

Will Ireland (4), Getty

The standout hit was Turn It On Again, a future rock radio staple that managed to balance punch and soulfulness with slippery time signatures and an unusual structure.

“I heard it the other day on the radio,” says Rutherford, “and of course the chorus doesn’t come ’til the end. If I thought about it now, I would’ve made the chorus come two or three times, not just at the very end.”

Nevertheless, *Duke* was the moment that Genesis fully moved into their next phase as arena-filling pop rockers with lingering proggy traits. The album was their first UK Number 1 (Number 11 in the US). Around the same time, Collins poured his romantic heartbreak into the songs for *Face Value*, his first solo album, which – surprising both himself and the others – also reached Number 1 in Britain, powered by its eerie and sonically dramatic single, In The Air Tonight.

Banks says he was happy to see his bandmate become successful in his own right. Though maybe not quite *that* successful.

“When In The Air Tonight was Number 2, it was kind of, ‘Wait a minute, this isn’t how it’s supposed to be,’” he laughs. “But anyhow his own self-confidence as a writer increased at that point. Whereas you might say that after Peter left, Mike and I perhaps dominated a little bit, by the time we got to *Abacab* [in 1981] and onwards, I felt Phil was very much an equal force.”

Then, the launch of MTV in 1981 turbo-charged Genesis’s success. “Suddenly you were on every single TV in every single bar, gym, hotel lobby,” says Rutherford. “You were known globally, and you didn’t have to go anywhere. You’d just stay home and have a hit and conquer the world.”

“We were lucky in the sense that Phil was good in front of a camera,” says Banks, “’cos Mike and I are completely useless. But we were able to do just enough. Y’know, we could sit in the background and put on a moustache, or a raincoat and we became part of the scenery and that sort of worked.”

Rutherford points out that Genesis’s initial transition into videos hadn’t been an easy one, however. He cites the 1976 clip for the title track of *A Trick Of The Tail* – in which a miniaturised Collins falls into Banks’s piano and then reclines on the body of Hackett’s guitar – as being particularly cringeworthy.

“Minuscule Phil,” he splutters. “I mean, it’s just embarrassing.”

PETER WHO?

The road from *The Lamb*... to *Duke*: smooth as you like, writes Tom Doyle.

A Trick Of The Tail

★★★★

(Charisma, 1976)

Genesis’s first as a four-piece returned them to the pastoral prog of 1973’s *Selling England By The Pound* (as if *The Lamb...* had been a strange blip). Ripples showcased Collins’ melodic whimsy, Squonk rocked hard and the Beatley title track riffed on Getting Better from the perspective of an Earth-landed alien.

GENESIS
A Trick of the Tail

Wind & Wuthering

★★★

(Charisma, 1976)

Tony Banks took control for this symphonic follow-up – Steve Hackett’s last (narked that his ideas were being sidelined). The flashy jazz-fusion moves of the near-eight-minute opener Eleventh Earl Of Mar now make Mike Rutherford wince, while his writing contribution Your Own Special Way pointed to a romantic balladeering future.

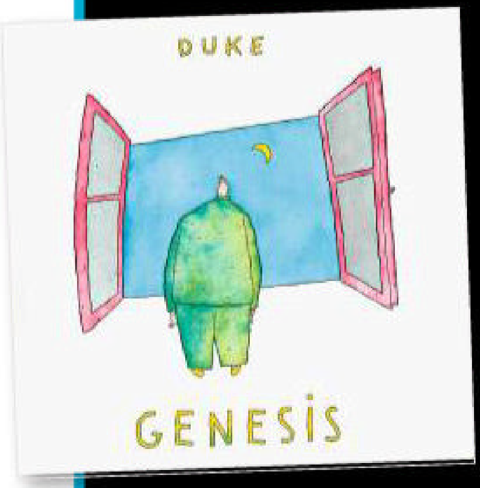
...And Then There Were Three...

★★★★

(Charisma, 1978)

Genesis may claim that punk passed them by, but there’s a definite harder, almost new wave edge to (still proggy) opener Down And Out. A tighter creative focus was evident due to the slimmed-down (and lasting) core band. One – see hypnotic love song Follow You Follow Me – that could produce hits.

GENESIS
...and then there were three...



Duke

★★★★

(Charisma, 1980)

The album that ushered in their commercial era, not least with the storming FM rocker Turn It On Again, featuring a gutsy soul vocal from Collins. Not that the progressive epics were gone (Behind The Lines; Duke’s Travels). Collins’ Misunderstanding pre-echoed his soon-to-be-released *Face Value* and worryingly successful (for the others) solo career.

Selling records by the ton: (clockwise from top left) on tour in May 1978 (from left) Rutherford, Chester Thompson, Collins, Banks, Daryl Stuermer; Banks, Rutherford, Collins and Nic Collins rehearse in 2020; (below) they're the Spitting Image of Genesis.

"It's probably one of the worst videos ever made," adds Collins.

On the other hand, all three agree that the 1986 promo for their driving protest song Land Of Confusion, featuring their unflattering puppets from satirical ITV show Spitting Image, was their highwater mark, promo-wise. "Yeah, that was the best one," says Rutherford, "because we didn't do anything, and it won a Grammy."

> "I've been doing it for over 50 years. I've loved it. But it's a different music world out there."
> Mike Rutherford

DESPITE THEIR CURRENT RETURN TO action, none of the existing members of Genesis envisage making a new studio album together. "If you start trying to do another album, and it doesn't work, it's a risk," Banks stresses. "I don't necessarily see the point, really."

For the keyboard player, there are lingering memories of 1997 Genesis album *Calling All Stations*, made with singer Ray Wilson (formerly of Scottish grungers Stiltskin) after Collins had quit the band the previous year.

"That slightly taints the whole Genesis catalogue," he reckons. "It's an album that's a bit weird."

VIRGIN
land of confusion
genesis

Banks is clearly open, however, to the idea of The Last Domino? Tour continuing beyond its final scheduled date at Boston's TD Garden on December 16.

"I think it depends a little bit how it all goes," he says. "How Phil stands up to it all. How the audience receives it and how we all feel about it, really."

Rutherford, for his part, talks about this tour with an air of finality: "Y'know, we're sort of putting it to bed, I think, pretty much, this time around."

Collins insists to MOJO that, as far as he's concerned, Genesis won't exist beyond the end of 2021. "This English and American tour," he firmly states, "that will be enough for me."

Here and now, he's officially removing the question mark from The Last Domino? Tour…?

"Yes," he hoots. "The question mark was Tony Banks's idea."

And so there will, of course, be a certain edge, and perhaps a huge sense of poignancy, to Genesis's last hurrah.

"We're a good age," says Rutherford, who turns 70 in October (Collins is 70 and Banks 71). "I sort of think, I've been doing it for over 50 years. It's a long time. I've loved it. But at the same time you can't get too lost in work. And it's a different music world out there. It's very foreign to me.

"We caught a rather nice time, I think," he adds. "It was a blank canvas. No rules, really."

Ask their drummer-turned-singer, meanwhile, why he thinks he's still (for now) the frontman of Genesis four-a-half-decades on, and he doesn't hesitate to respond.

"Well," Phil Collins laughs, "they couldn't find anybody else." Ⓜ

With a legendary rare vinyl dealer as their iconic figurehead and a fugue-state overload of paleolithic riffing, ENDLESS BOOGIE fulfilled the planet's plea for a band that's "Neu!-meets-AC/DC". But how do they do it, and what do they mean by the "purity" of rock'n'roll? "Do it, don't pursue it," they tell DAVID FRICKE.

Photography by **CHERYL DUNN**

IN THE LATE '90s, THE HOTTEST ROCK'N'ROLL SPOT IN NEW YORK CITY WAS ALSO THE best-kept secret in town. Once a week, a tight gang of record collectors and day labourers in the indie-rock side of the music business convened with instruments at a practice room on the Lower East Side to jam for hours in the letter and spirit of their name: Endless Boogie. It was "not a 'band' band," guitarist Jesper Eklow recalls – more like an improbable dream come true.

A few years earlier, Eklow and Johan Kugelberg – Swedish natives and rare-vinyl fiends working in the New York offices of Matador Records – decided that what the world really needed was a combo "that sounded like Neu!-meets-AC/DC," as Eklow puts it. They had the name, borrowed from a 1971 double album by John Lee Hooker, and the ideal front man, if only they could get him out of his apartment.

Paul Major was a legendary elder of collecting, a genial, reclusive dealer in high-end psychedelia and small-pressing outsider rock with an encyclopaedic passion for music and an epic cascade of dark hair. "He looked amazing, and I knew he played guitar," Eklow says. "But we had to come up with schemes to get him downtown, have a beer. Finally, we started rehearsing, 7pm every Tuesday" – starting in 1997, at a rehearsal space loaned from Matador band Chavez.

Friends and hipster-scholars cycled through the line-up, anchored by Eklow and Major, and hung out at the jams. Informal recordings, later issued on maddeningly limited LPs and CDRs, revealed a hypnotic riot of infinite stomp: guitars laden with Blue Cheer-weight distortion and the progressive-blues assault of the Groundhogs; improvising in the Scandinavian-Fillmore spirit of Träd Gräs Och Stenar; Can's German heartbeat fused with the rollin' and tumblin' of Canned Heat; and on top, Major's cornered-animal growl suggesting Captain Beefheart with Lou Reed's monotone.

"Jesper would have a riff and we'd mess around it," Major explains. "When it was clicking, it was easy to stay there. We'd get locked into that zone – one big thing, swinging all around."

"We weren't trying to get signed," Eklow insists. "It wasn't like we were going to be Pavement." In fact, ➢

Let there be chooglin': Endless Boogie's Paul Major collects himself, New York, August 1, 2021.

Cheryl Dunn

Locked in the zone: Endless Boogie onstage at the Matt Groening/Pavement-curated ATP Festival, Butlins, Minehead, May 16, 2010; (insets) John Lee Hooker's inspirational *Endless Boogie*; the sleeve for *Admonitions*, the next EB long-player.

JOHN LEE HOOKER
ENDLESS BOOGIE

> **"JESPER'S TAKE IS THAT PAUL IS THE PUREST PERSON. AND WE WANT TO GET THIS PURITY OUT OF HIM. BUT HOW DO YOU DO THAT?"**
> **Matt Sweeney**

< it was erstwhile Pavement frontman Stephen Malkmus who coaxed Endless Boogie to play their first gig, opening for him at New York's Bowery Ballroom on January 25, 2001. "We panicked," Eklow admits. "Suddenly we're going to be in front of 500 people. Malkmus was like, 'Dude, you got this.'"

Major recalls that after that show, "We had to ask ourselves: Are we a band that does gigs now? And the decision was do it, don't pursue it. If people ask us to play, we'll say yes. But we weren't climbing the ladder. We were friends."

TWENTY YEARS ON, ENDLESS BOOGIE ARE STILL A band of friends on their own contrarian terms. They have no manager, booking agent or crew, touring more like backpackers than a rock group – in Europe, for example, by train pass. "We can come to any environment and play on whatever gear they have to offer," Eklow notes proudly. "It's easy to play great on good gear. On shit gear, that takes skill."

Endless Boogie also have a remarkable discography for a group with no career objective and few conventional songs: nearly two dozen releases in various collector-driven formats, including a FLAC-file set containing all three hours of a 2013 live broadcast on New Jersey's WFMU. "I'm still in awe of the band," says guitarist Matt Sweeney, once of Chavez, who has played on all their studio LPs from 2008 debut *Focus Level*. "It's crude," he says of Endless Boogie's sound, "constructed out of this deep shit we all like. Yet there is something profoundly musical about it and very difficult to do."

That mystical simplicity is all over *Admonitions*, Endless Boogie's fifth album for the No Quarter label, both the most expansive and reductive album they have made. The Offender and Jim Tully run 20 minutes each and were cut by Eklow, Major, Sweeney, bassist Mike Bones and longtime drummer Harry Druzd in February 2020 at a former 19th century carriage house in Brooklyn. "We were actually in a sub-basement," Sweeney says, "probably used for grain storage – literally the endless-boogie hole." By contrast, Eklow's nine-minute solo piece, The Incompetent Villains Of 1968, is a simple, low-end hook in thunderous amp drone.

The rest of *Admonitions* comes from a 2019 stay at Träd Gräs Och Stenar's studio in Sweden that was supposed to produce an album. "It was fine," Eklow says of the sessions – a low-key way of summing up the desert-blues menace of Disposable Thumbs, which sounds like it fell off the reels for Beefheart's *Mirror Man*, and the dark, tangled jangle in Counterfeiter with guest overdubs contributed later by Kurt Vile. "But it wasn't really gelling," Eklow goes on. "Sometimes you have ideas and it comes together real easy. Or it's brutally hard. Sometimes it's a bit of both."

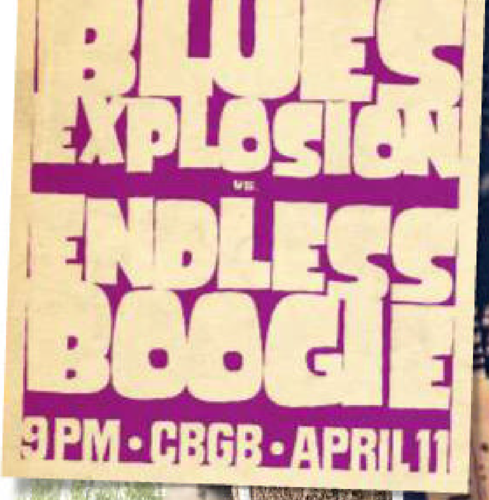
"The usual deal is Jesper will have basic riffs or grooves," Major says, "and we'll record four or five hours of stuff, see what emerges. There's not a lot of talking about it, more of a semi-conscious thing – not trying to calculate effort, just capture the thing."

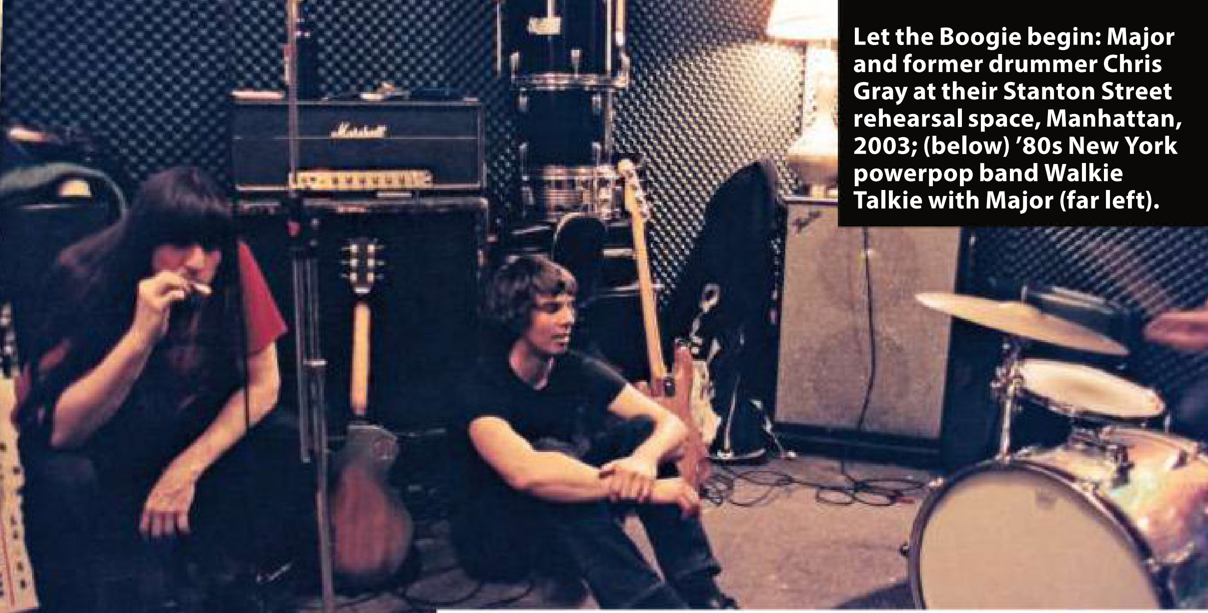
Major, 67, freely describes Endless Boogie as "Jesper's aesthetic". Eklow, 52, brings the riffs and names the tunes, putting long hours into editing and mixing the performances – so secreted that Major didn't know Vile was on *Admonitions* until he got the test pressing.

"It goes back to why the band exists in the first place," Sweeney says. "It's Jesper's vision of what Paul should be doing. He's got this thing on guitar – I saw it in the Chavez space – where it's one riff for hours but he keeps coming up with these turnarounds in the way he plays it, like he's restarting the sentence in a new way. But it has to flow out of him," he adds, "and you can't ask for it. Jesper's take is that Paul is the purest person. And we want to get this purity out of him. But how do you do that? I've seen it a lot. Jesper is trying to pull this thing out of Paul, and Paul is like, 'You mean like this?'"

GROWING UP IN LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY, MAJOR felt like an alien from the start – "completely weirdo-isolated," he says, "always the last one picked for the team. Kids chased me around, but I was the second-fastest guy in my school." Music became his lifeline as soon as he heard Count Five's Psychotic Reaction in 1966, quickly followed by *Revolver* and *Are You Experienced*. That others did not value that adventure and salvation as much as he did hit home when he spotted The 13th Floor Eleva-

Getty, Courtesy Wolf Roxon, Courtesy Paul Major, Jesper Eklow





Let the Boogie begin: Major and former drummer Chris Gray at their Stanton Street rehearsal space, Manhattan, 2003; (below) '80s New York powerpop band Walkie Talkie with Major (far left).

Boogie in the backyard: (from left) Mike Bones, Harry Druzd, Major, Jesper Eklow, Binic, France, May 2019.

tors' *Easter Everywhere* in a Louisville record store for 29 cents.

Major began dealing in earnest in 1978 when, after stops in St. Louis and Los Angeles, he moved to New York, where he played in bands such as Walkie Talkie and The Sorcerers, and worked in Bleecker Street shop Village Oldies. He remembers "seeing a Moving Sidewalks album for 50 dollars and thinking, 'Oh, I had that.'" By the mid '80s, Major's sales catalogues were famed in collecting circles for his colourful, impassioned arguments on behalf of then-obscure acid-rock pioneers like Fifty Foot Hose and private-pressing wonders by Kenneth Higney and Peter Grudzien.

Eklow was living in Sweden when he first encountered Major – over the phone at Kugelberg's house. The latter got Major's catalogues in the mail and "called Paul from time to time," Eklow says. "Paul would play these records over the phone and tell us all this stuff about them." After Eklow and Kugelberg moved to New York, they often visited Major at his apartment where he was "such a gracious host, one of those rare collectors that wanted to share everything he had." Kugelberg, a music historian/archivist who played drums in Endless Boogie for a while, returned that hospitality by co-editing Feel The Music: The Psychedelic Worlds Of Paul Major, a 2017 coffee-table tome based on the catalogues and graced with Major's tales of Manhattan's underbelly – like the time he visited Genovese crime boss Vincent 'The Chin' Gigante, owner of the pinball machines in Village Oldies.

"If those catalogues hadn't happened, there would have been no Endless Boogie," Major says. The band came at the right time as Major "burned out on the intensity of the record-collecting thing" and customers with "pathological hoarding qualities". After Endless Boogie started, Major met people who argued that "you can't be a record collector and have the authentic thing to play in a band – like there was some intellectual distance. My answer would be Canned Heat: insane, obsessive record collectors."

As the pandemic plays out, Endless Boogie remain suspended as a touring band. "I can't wait to do something," says Eklow, who moved back to Sweden. "I want to go to New York just to rehearse and see those dudes." Major is holding tight in Queens, along the ocean in Far Rockaway. "All the way, this was about the live experience," he says. "I'm sure when we get back, it will be 'Oh yeah, we're still there.'"

For now, Major has turned his collecting focus on little-known pop-psych 45s which he has played at DJ gigs on the beach this summer. "It's mostly families, the general public," he says. "They're hearing Fifty Foot Hose songs and asking, 'What's that?' It's pretty awesome."

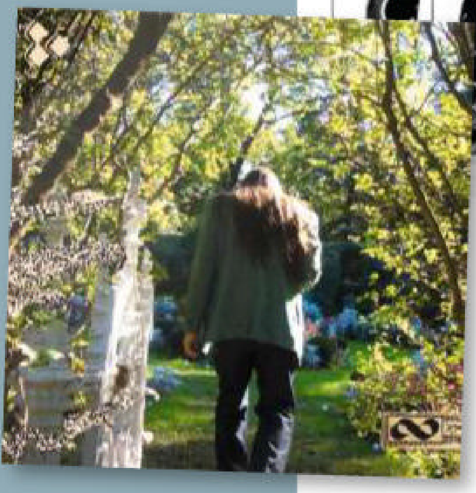
To Infinity, And BEYOND!

Three of the best Endless Boogie albums so far, by **David Fricke**.

FOCUS LEVEL

★★★★

(No Quarter, 2008)



After more than a decade of woodshedding, their maelstrom was unleashed on this double LP's worth of barbed-fuzz hooks and iron-horse drive in tight arrangements. Major was credited as Top Dollar, adding mystery by alluding to his collecting prowess. But one title said it all: Gimme The Awesome.

LONG ISLAND

★★★★

(No Quarter, 2013)

The third album was more of the same plus textural vengeance in the Stooges typhoon of Occult Banker and the single-minded VU drone of The Montgomery Manuscript, with its folk rock arpeggios and a Can-like shuffle. "Endless Boogie can't help sounding like hip rare-vinyl freaks," I wrote at the time in Rolling Stone. "But it's a gag with legs."

THE GATHERED AND SCATTERED VOLS 1-4

★★★★

(No Quarter, 2020)

Here is The Crude Truth, as one title puts it – a 4-LP box of primordial ooze from those early rehearsals and more. Fidelity varies, but the meaty crawl of Cretan Miniatures and Rattleshake Snake, a 19-minute wigout loosely carved from a familiar Fleetwood Mac riff, are treasures. A 1,000-copy pressing sold out, but the whole digital stash costs $20 via Bandcamp.

THRILLS ’N’ SPOOLS AND BELLYACHES

A logistical car crash, a furious George, a ubiquitous Yoko, then – eventually – the split: the film and the album of Let It Be have been shaded by partial versions of what went on, inside **THE BEATLES**, in January 1969. Now a book, a box set and three films by Peter Jackson are poised to shed revelatory light on the thing they called Get Back. “It was always something special,” discovers **JOHN HARRIS**.

Photograph by **ETHAN A. RUSSELL**.

NEW INTERVIEWS! Paul McCartney, Peter Jackson, Michael Lindsay Hogg, Glyn Johns, Giles Martin.

an intimate bioscopic experience with
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“Let it be”
Produced by NEIL ASPINALL Directed by MICHAEL LINDSAY-HOGG TECHNICOLOR
United Artists
ORIGINAL MOTION PICTURE SCORE AVAILABLE ON APPLE RECORDS
G

Dig it: (main, from left) MIchael Lindsay-Hogg (film director), John Lennon, Ringo Starr, Paul McCartney, George Harrison and Billy Preston at Apple Studios, January 26, 1969; (inset) the original 1970 film poster.

Ethan A. Russell/©Apple Corps Ltd.

“IT’S THE ULTIMATE BACKSTAGE SNEAK PEEK. YOU’RE REALLY THE FLY ON the wall, and The Beatles are working, and you can see it all. There it is. And I love that.”

Paul McCartney is on the phone from Long Island, enthusing about the huge archival project titled Get Back, and the new films – put together by the superstar film-maker Peter Jackson, and due to be released in late November – that draw on the hours of footage originally shot for the 1970 documentary Let It Be, released just as the world became aware of The Beatles’ break-up, and long understood as a grim portrait of a group nearing its end.

Fifty years on, the man who was by then The Beatles’ *de facto* leader sounds full of a mixture of relief and enthusiasm. As McCartney sees it, a much-misunderstood phase of Beatles history has at last been put the right way up – something vividly demonstrated by what he says about one small aspect of a single day back in early 1969.

On Thursday January 9, The Beatles were spending their sixth day at Twickenham Film Studios, working on new songs and supposedly rehearsing for their first performance in front of an audience since August ’66, which would be filmed for a one-off TV special. They had formed themselves into a circular huddle, amid teacups, wine glasses, ashtrays and pieces of paper full of lyrics and chords, while a camera crew filmed what they were doing in forensic detail and two Nagra tape recorders captured almost all their conversation. This material was intended to be used as a supporting feature: a short behind-the-scenes film that would whet people’s appetite for the big live show.

That day, McCartney worked on The Long And Winding Road, and briefly played early incarnations of Her Majesty, Golden Slumbers, Oh! Darling, and Carry That Weight, which he thought might be a knockabout country number in the style of Act Naturally, the Buck Owens hit they had covered four years before. The whole band went through Don’t Let Me Down, I’ve Got A Feeling and One After 909, which had been largely written by the young John Lennon and first recorded with George Martin back in 1963. The song that would become Get Back also began to cohere.

If all this outwardly suggested a day of bonhomie and creativity, there were also more difficult undercurrents. For a lot of their time at Twickenham, Lennon seemed quiet and withdrawn. Harrison, meanwhile, was sometimes presenting an even more awkward picture. He would walk out of the sessions the next day with the priceless line, “See you round the clubs.”

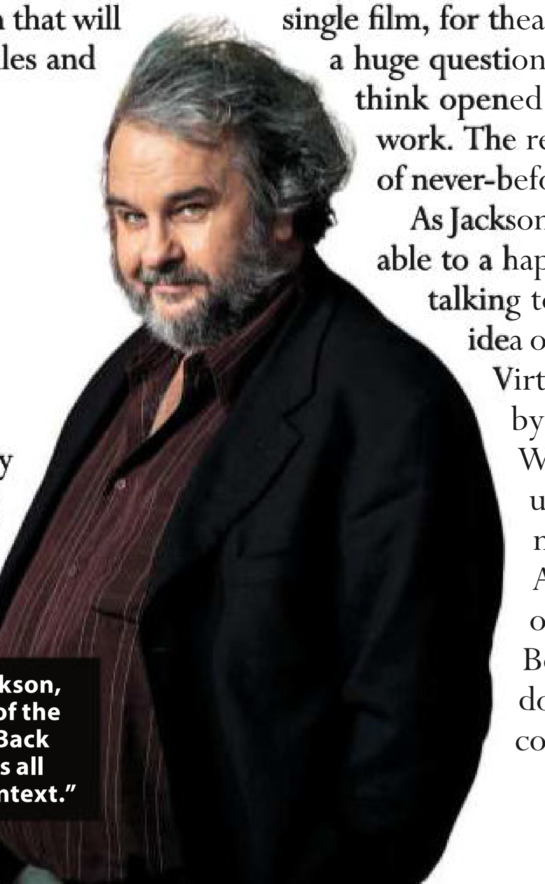
Yet 24 hours before Harrison temporarily quit, The Beatles were still alighting on real magic – not least when Paul led initial work on She Came In Through The Bathroom Window, a song inspired by a recent incident when some of the Beatles fans fondly known as the Apple Scruffs had illicitly entered his home in St John’s Wood.

The footage of what ensued is a delight. Lennon and McCartney’s vocal harmonies lock in as a matter of instinct, and even at this early stage, the song is audibly becoming the creation that will eventually appear on *Abbey Road*. There are also smiles and guffaws, as the two of them trade lines:

“And so I quit the police department…”
“Gerra job, cop!…”
“And got myself a proper job…”
“Bloody ’bout time too if you ask me…”
“And though she tried her best to help me…”
“You bloody need it too…”

It was the scene that persuaded Paul McCartney that returning so exhaustively to what we have long known as the Let It Be period was a good idea.

“When I first heard Peter was going to do it,” he says, “we chatted, and I said to him, ‘I’m not sure I’m going to like this, Peter, ’cos I remember [this period] as a nice thing, but the first time round, it became a little bit The Break Up Of The Beatles, and we were mourning the whole thing.’ He understood. He went away and started e-mailing me, and saying, ‘You know, I’m not finding that at all.’ He said: ‘You won’t believe it – there’s all sorts of great stuff.’ He sent me that Bathroom Window scene, and it really helped me.



Peter Jackson, director of the new Get Back films: “It’s all about context.”

Alamy

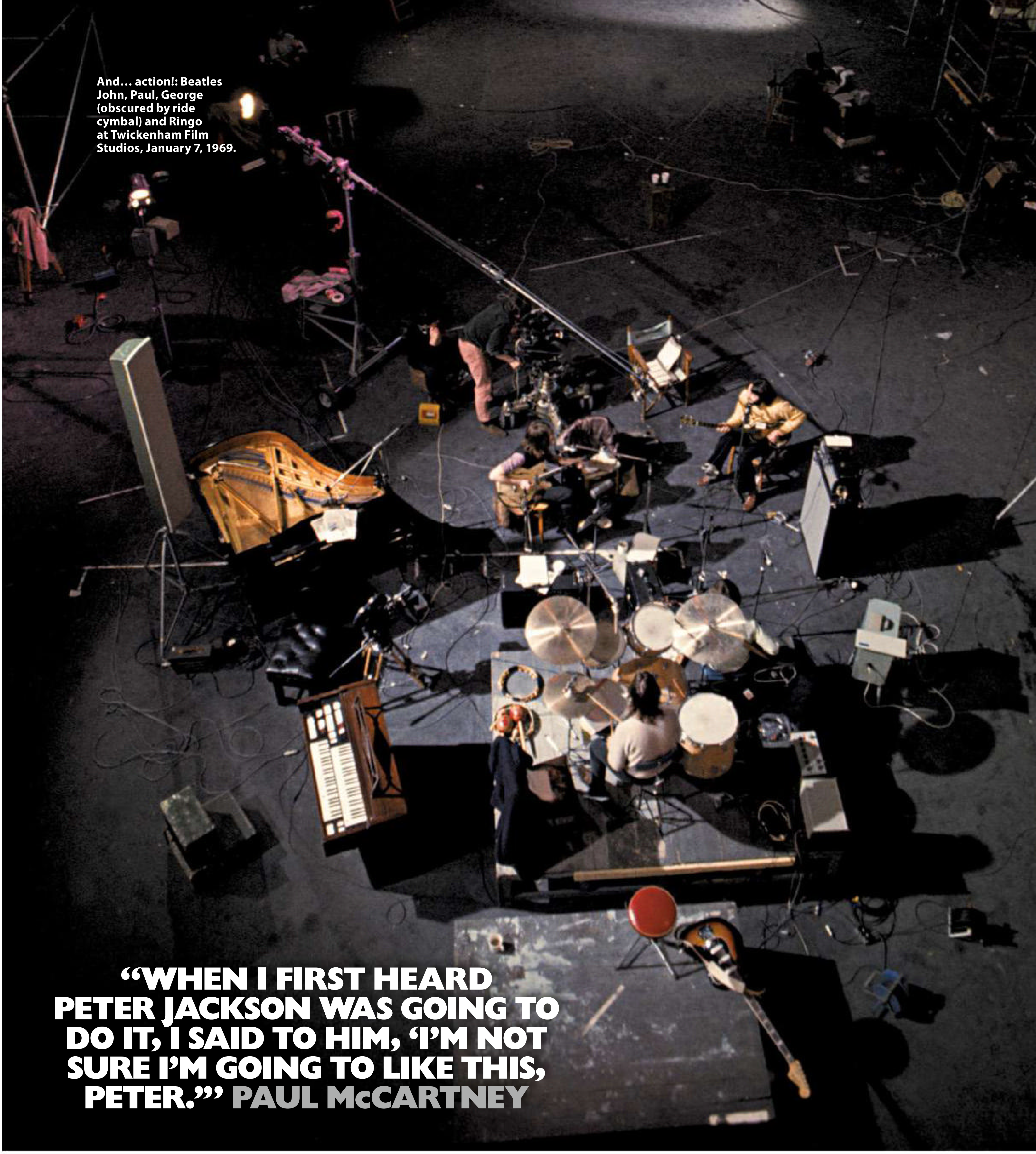
“When I saw it, it was like, ‘I *love* this.’ That was me and John. It was also me and George. It was also George and Ringo. All of us had that relationship, and that’s what made us strong. When I start goofing at the end, going, ‘Tuesday’s on the phone to me – Hello Tuesday,’ John could have just laughed and carried on, but he would naturally pick it up. And he carries on. That was a big feature of our relationship since we were kids: if one of us started goofing off, one of the others would join in. That’s what I love: the sense of humour comes through, instead of the sense of *regret*.”

A WEEK AFTER McCARTNEY’S CALL, PETER JACKSON sets aside two hours to explain – via Zoom – almost every aspect of the Get Back project, and the new light it shines on The Beatles’ story. When we speak, he is still working on unfinished elements – not least its soundtrack, newly remixed by Giles Martin – and is as energised and tightly-focused as you would expect someone in the midst of such a taxing last stretch to be.

It barely needs mentioning that Jackson is the Oscar-winning creator of the film versions of The Lord Of The Rings (floated, coincidentally, in the 1960s as a potential vehicle for The Beatles) and The Hobbit. The New Zealander was also the director and producer of They Shall Not Grow Old, the 2018 film for which original footage of the First World War was restored and cut together to stunning effect. A similar feat sits at the heart of Get Back: everything is pin-sharp, and The Beatles and their world come to sudden and vivid life.

Jackson and his team have been working on Get Back for around four years. Their labours were originally intended to result in a single film, for theatrical release. But when the pandemic placed a huge question mark over the global cinema industry, a rethink opened up the prospect of a much longer piece of work. The result is three two-hour films, largely made up of never-before-seen material.

As Jackson explains, his work on Get Back is partly traceable to a happy accident. In the summer of 2017, he was talking to The Beatles’ Apple organisation about the idea of a touring Beatles exhibition which might use Virtual Reality technology, something pioneered by Jackson’s New Zealand-based company Wingnut. He says he tentatively suggested that unseen footage from early 1969 might be good material for such an experience – whereupon Apple told him that on that score, they had other plans: with the 50th anniversary of Let It Be approaching and exhaustive work tracking down hours of missing audio recordings almost complete, it was maybe time for a new film.



And… action!: Beatles John, Paul, George (obscured by ride cymbal) and Ringo at Twickenham Film Studios, January 7, 1969.

“WHEN I FIRST HEARD PETER JACKSON WAS GOING TO DO IT, I SAID TO HIM, ‘I’M NOT SURE I’M GOING TO LIKE THIS, PETER.’” PAUL McCARTNEY

Ethan A. Russell/©Apple Corps Ltd.

“I’m not a particularly forward sort of guy – I’m quite shy,” says Jackson. “But I just said to them, Well, if you want someone to do the documentary, I’ll stick my hand up right now.”

For around a week, he sat in Apple’s South Kensington HQ, looking at whole days of rushes. Having read innumerable Beatles histories and bought *Let It Be*-era bootlegs, he was as convinced of the received idea of the period’s supposed unending misery as any Beatles enthusiast. But as he watched, he was struck by “the humour, the jokes, the good-natured spirit of it all”. He agreed in principle to take the project on, and then began immersing himself in 130 hours of audio and video. “Partway through, I remember calling [Apple’s] Jeff [Jones] and saying ‘This is really great stuff. I *love* it.’”

When it was announced that Jackson was to restore and revive the mountain of footage shot in 1969, suggestions that his work would reveal a sunnier side to the *Let It Be* period were seen by some as dangerous revisionism. Just before Christmas 2020, a five-minute montage Jackson made for YouTube – built from some of the sessions’ light-hearted moments, and intended to cheer viewers up in the midst of the pandemic – also fed the idea that the new films might smooth over the period’s problems and tensions. But this perception, as Jackson explains, is nowhere near the truth.

For the YouTube clip, he says, “we chucked together a reel of a lot of goofy, funny stuff. But that’s never been our agenda. I just wanted to try to do it truthfully. And truthful [means] a funny

Continues on page 74

THE SHOW MUST GO?

FROM JANUARY 2, The Beatles endlessly debated the kind of live performance, if any, Get Back should end on. As late as January 25, six days from their iconic gig on the roof of 3 Savile Row and in a break from rehearsing Two Of Us, their discussions remained inconclusive. Witness this revealing extract from Apple/Callaway's Get Back book. Present: the four Beatles plus Yoko Ono, Michael Lindsay-Hogg and Glyn Johns…

John: There isn't any big scene now – all we've got is us, and the documentary, where we happen to be singing. And that bit [ie. the show] has gone. I thought that was all over, you know.

Paul: What?

John: The bit about the show, the finale. The finale'd just be us doing the numbers well.

Paul: Yeah. I think it probably is, yeah…

John: But lit as nicely as you can.

Paul: I dig a show, you know. I dig a pony. I like that, and I always have, you know.

John: Well… what are you trying to make a show out of now?

Paul: I can't answer it, you know.

John: I know.

Paul: I know that there's no sort of answer for it. But… I can't put it into words. It's a bit like what's wrong with Apple.

John: Too many people. (*laughs*)

Paul: I just like making the best out of an idea – sort of grabbing the remnants of an idea, making that into…

John: It's after the horse has gone, you know. We started it like that, and now we're salving [sic] it like that really, aren't we?

Paul: Anyway, we'll decide later what it turns into.

Michael: What was originally [the] idea, was a show and a documentary… and that went out the window.

John: Well, originally it was a show, and then a show and a documentary, and the show vanished.

Paul: But I'm making another album again, you know. And I'd meant to put them into some other framework this time. That's what I sort of thought. And the only one other thing was the TV show, you know… I do like to get out – get out in the open, have a change of scene, and go and do it somewhere else, do it on a live show, or do it even [on] a TV studio floor, do it on a stage… just without a sort of feeling of…

John: That's what the big thing was about. Nobody else wants to go on the stage or do a TV show, you know, that's what it's about. Nobody wants to get out there, you know. And then if you want to get out there, you'll have to find some other form of getting out there.

Paul: I suppose that's true, you know.

John: I think so, you know. I'm only going by what's happened.

Paul: Yeah, yeah.

John: [to George] What do you think? I mean that's what it was about, wasn't it?

George: That's why I can't… you know, it's being this funny thing about…

Glyn: What we've got is you all playing live in one room. This is it, right, for the first time, for a start, and it's really working extremely well. That in itself is a fresh thing for The Beatles.

George: You know, we've really wasted a lot of time, because we could have just worked out which number, and done it, and got it really good – and even good live – just like that.

John: Yeah. Had we chosen in the beginning to do this, though.

George: And we would have had about five tracks already.

Paul: I don't know why I'm moaning.

Michael: What you're moaning about is there's no payoff.

Glyn: Every idea that we could think of was put forward, and everybody tried to get it together, really… nobody could have tried harder, but it didn't happen. So if it didn't happen, so the time isn't right for that (*laughs*), so let's do this. And this is so good. This is great.

John: See, it's turned out [like] that, and it's not what Paul wants… Say it's his number, this whole show, well, he's compromised, so that it's actually turned into our number more than his number…

Paul: Yeah. And that's all right, you know.

John: It's all right. But that's what's bugging you really, 'cos it's a different number, you know. It's turned into a rock number or, as opposed to a quiet number or something like that. And… (*pause*)… it's just that, really.

Paul: But it's just funny to sort of realise that after this is all over, you'll be off in a black bag somewhere… [in] the Albert Hall, you know. And sort of doing shows and stuff, you know, and digging that thing a bit.

John: But I would dig to play on stage, you know. I mean, if everything was all right and there was no messing and we were just going to play on stage.

Paul: Yeah. But it's only that. It's only that. I'd like to see Ringo [playing]… and all that.

John: That's why I said yes to the TV show. [But] I didn't want the hell of doing it… I like playing. That's why I went on the Stones' show [the Rock And Roll Circus], you know, and that's why I'll do other things. But if we all don't want to do that…

Paul: Yeah, I know. It's like majority decisions.

John: But I don't want to sort of go on the road again.

A moment of silence, punctuated by George's guitar.

Paul: I just feel as though we are on the road again. We're in a studio, and we just keep to the same environment totally, always, you know. We don't ever attempt to break out of it.

Yoko: Maybe next week they might change their minds.

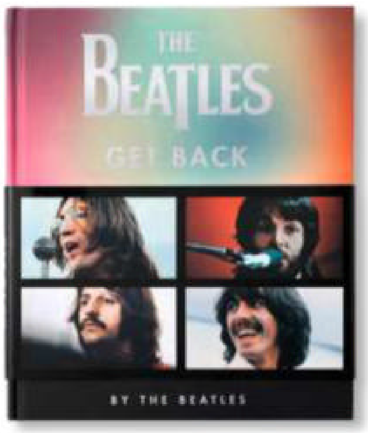
Paul: It's nicer in a warm climate, you know.

George: I think this is the nicest place I've been for a long time, this studio.

Paul: Yeah, it is.

George: And also, this is the most I've ever played by playing every day. And I can just feel my fingers getting loose a bit, you know, because we don't get the chance to do that. But if we go out on the road, then it gets back into that one. And really I just want to play. And you can play better without having to do all those things.

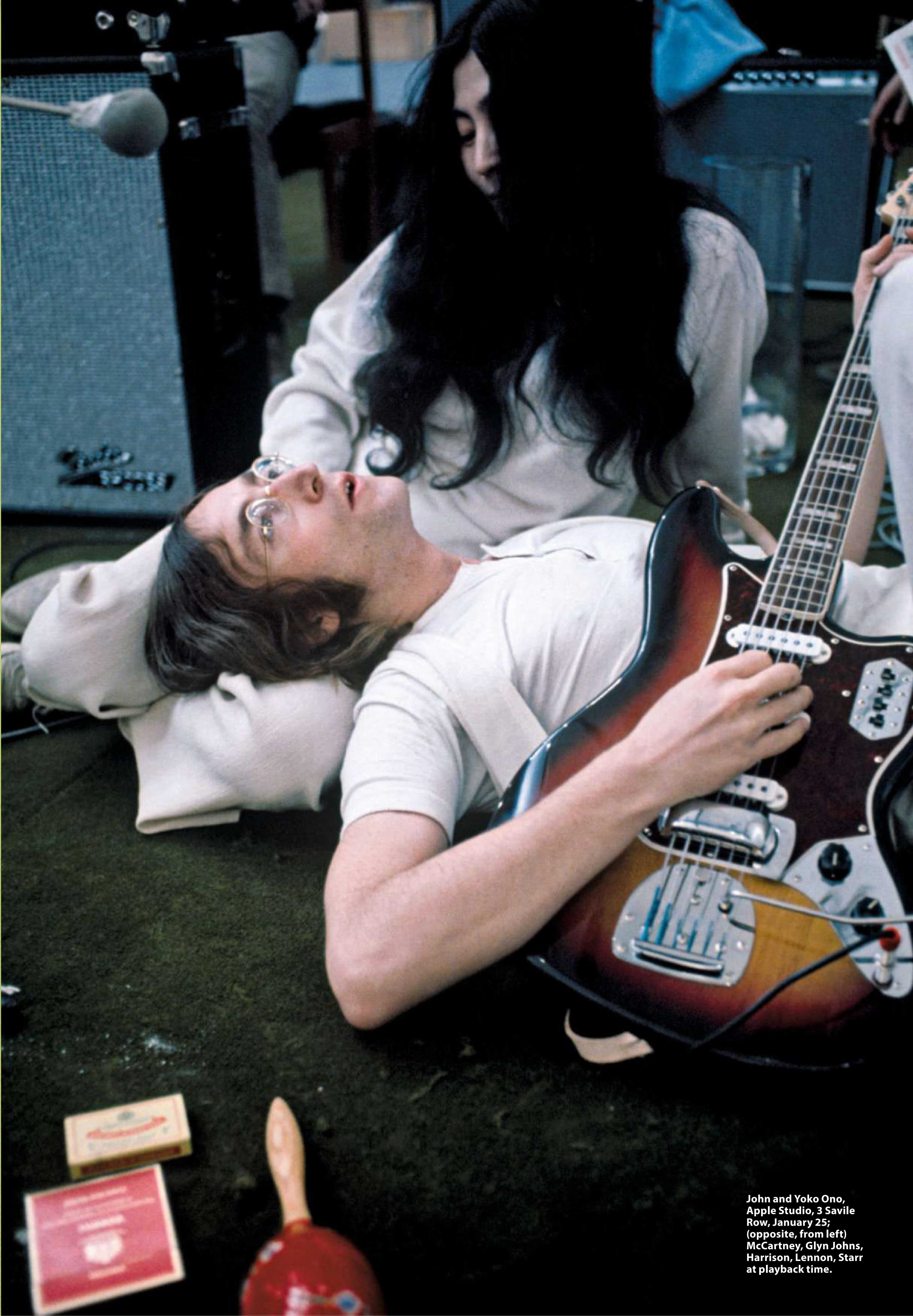
Paul: Yeah.



The Beatles: Get Back book is published by Callaway and Apple Corps on October 12. Over 240 pages in hardback, it includes transcribed conversations between John, Paul, George, Ringo and others at the *Get Back/Let It Be* sessions, edited from 120 hours of audio by MOJO's John Harris, plus over 200 photos by Ethan A. Russell and Linda McCartney. Foreword is by Peter Jackson, introduction by Hanif Kureishi. **For more info, visit thebeatles.com**

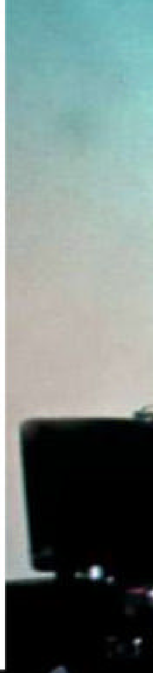
> **"NOBODY ELSE WANTS TO GO ON THE STAGE OR DO A TV SHOW, YOU KNOW." JOHN, TO PAUL**

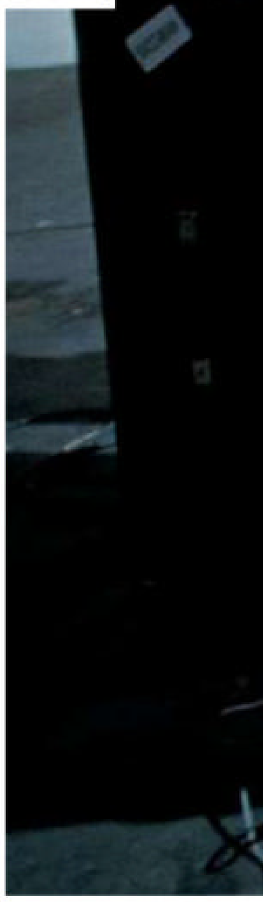
Text (transcribed from original Nagra sound recordings): © Apple Films Limited. Images: Ethan A. Russell/© Apple Corps Limited. (2)



John and Yoko Ono, Apple Studio, 3 Savile Row, January 25; (opposite, from left) McCartney, Glyn Johns, Harrison, Lennon, Starr at playback time.

Chasing the impossible: from the stage of Liverpool's Cavern, early '60s to (right) Hey Jude in September '68.





"IT'S A FESTERING WOUND, AND YESTERDAY WE ALLOWED IT TO GO EVEN DEEPER, AND WE DIDN'T GIVE [GEORGE] ANY BANDAGES." JOHN LENNON

< combination of goodwill with a lot of moments of tension and stress. It's all there. I mean, you could easily mount an argument to say that this movie is actually a lot tougher than Let It Be. We've got things that are more stressful and tough in some respects than what you see there. The point is that you understand the context. It's all about context."

THE CONTEXT OF THE ORIGINAL LET IT BE MOVIE was Paul McCartney's announcement in April 1970 that he considered The Beatles dissolved. When the film was released the following month, reviewers broadly agreed with the judgment of the Sunday Telegraph: "Let It Be is rather like watching the Albert Hall being dismantled into a block of National Coal Board offices."

In 2021, Let It Be director Michael Lindsay-Hogg still regrets how his film became a hostage to fortune. "No one was looking after the movie at all," he tells MOJO today. "They'd broken up. They didn't care. It was a bit like the little child abandoned in the doorway, which didn't help the way it was received."

Lindsay-Hogg, now 81, had made his name on the trailblazing TV pop show Ready Steady Go!, and directed the 1966 promotional shorts for The Beatles' Paperback Writer and Rain. In late 1968, around the time he took charge of The Rolling Stones' Rock And Roll Circus (made for TV, also featuring John Lennon and Yoko Ono, and unreleased until 1996), he oversaw the filming of clips for Hey Jude and Revolution at Twickenham. It was the presence of an audience for the former song that sparked the idea for a live, televised Beatles performance.

"We did six takes," he says. "And between each take, we'd have to put on a fresh two-inch video tape. There was a 10- or 11-minute break between each take. Their Hamburg instincts kicked in: they were surrounded by a couple of hundred people, and they started to play. The go-to at that time was Tamla Motown, and Little Richard and Chuck Berry. Of course, the crowd loved it. And *they* loved it. And then Paul called me and said, 'You know, when we were doing Hey Jude, we had a good time. And it gave us the idea that maybe we could play to some kind of an audience again. What we want to do is a TV special. Do you want to direct it?'"

As the filming at Twickenham began, Lindsay-Hogg had visions of a live performance that would be spectacular. The venues discussed included the Albert Hall, a bandstand in Hyde Park, and a Roman amphitheatre at Sabratha in Libya, with a suggestion that The Beatles and a selection of fans might sail there on a P&O liner.

"I was looking forward to delivering – to the world – the great Beatles extravaganza: the wonderful songs they were writing, coming out of these four extraordinary people who represented optimism and enthusiasm," says Lindsay-Hogg. "The television special would show all that, and subsequently there would be world peace and everyone would have ice cream (*laughs*). Once I saw it was going awry, which was when George left, we sat around in a desultory way, wondering what was going on. I saw, obviously, that the all-time great Beatles extravaganza was going [away], but I was also thinking, 'Now what?'"

The answer soon became clear: he was now making a long-form documentary for theatrical release, but the fact that it took well over a year to complete meant that it collided with The Beatles' split, and was understood accordingly. "What irks me is, because they broke up before it came out, not clocking that it actually was made a year before, everybody sees it as the breakup movie," he says. "And consequently thinks it's sad, it's a downer, it's a bummer."

The original Let It Be was only briefly available to watch at home – in the early 1980s – and was withdrawn from TV screenings at around the same time, but Lindsay-Hogg says he is looking forward to a fully restored version of his film coming out some time after the release of Jackson's Get Back. Not that he has any problems with the latter. In fact, when he was informed that Jackson was set to work on the original footage, he says his response was simple: "I said, 'You're going to be surprised to hear this, but I'm delighted, because I wouldn't want to do it.'

"The bits I've seen that Peter's done are really fabulous," he says. "And also, very early on, he said, 'You know, I think you're going to be in this movie a lot. Even if I wanted to get you out of it, I couldn't, because in you're in it so much.' He's always said he's making a documentary about the making of a documentary."

FIFTY YEARS AGO, THANKS TO RAW WOUNDS AND the limitations of a single film, going deep into The Beatles' relationships and chronicling their changed plans and abandoned hopes would have been unthinkable. But the new films push all that into the foreground. The result is the complex story of four people drifting apart but mostly getting on very well, and how they end up doing something spectacular, almost despite themselves.

"It's a story of planning for a concert that never takes place," says Jackson, breaking into a smile. "And then it's the story of a concert that does take place, which wasn't planned."

Contrary to received opinion, it is also a portrait of one of the most prolific spells in The Beatles' career, when music was pouring out of McCartney and Harrison in particular.

Yet George's exit stalls their concert plans and commences one of the Get Back films' most compelling passages, in which the remaining Beatles engage in candid conversations about their future. Thanks to a microphone secreted in the Twickenham canteen by Lindsay-Hogg, we hear John frame George's departure in stark terms: "It's a festering wound, and yesterday we allowed it to go even deeper, and we didn't give him any bandages."

Paul McCartney, meanwhile, is a careful, sensitive, emotionally literate presence, trying to orientate four increasingly different in-

Landmark Media

Daily Mirror
Lennon-McCartney song team splits up
PAUL IS QUITTING THE BEATLES
Swing to Labour
Clash over the running of Apple
LET IT BE

The Beatles at Twickenham Film Studios, January 7, 1969; (insets) news of the split breaks; *Let It Be* and *Abbey Road* sleeves.

Ethan A. Russell/©Apple Corps Limited.

dividuals in the same direction, while remaining respectful of their differences, particularly when it comes to John's relationship with Yoko ("It's not even so much of an obstacle, as long as we're not trying to surmount it"). And as they discuss the prospect of The Beatles coming to an end, he is visibly distraught.

"Paul was getting very, very upset," says Jackson. "People have heard bootlegs [of these conversations] for years. But because nobody's ever seen the pictures, you haven't seen the tears that well up in Paul's eyes. He's desperately trying not to cry, and he's breathing like a goldfish to sort of try to push the tears away. That's all in the picture. I mean, there's such a big difference between the audio that has been out there, and actually putting pictures with it. It transforms it."

Having seen so much of him, what did Jackson make of John?

"The most unexpected thing, that I didn't even contemplate going into this – is how immensely patient he is: how patient and quiet and friendly," says the director. "I said that to Paul, actually. Over the years, whenever Paul's been asked to talk about John, he usually ends up saying that John was a lovely guy. Well I've seen John be funny, I've seen him be witty, I've seen him be sarcastic, but I've never really seen him be lovely. But the lovely John that Paul has been talking about for years was actually captured on film."

And Ringo?

"The weirdest, strangest thing is that Ringo is always regarded as being the upbeat member. [But] of all of them, he looks the most down and depressed of the lot. You've never read about that in the books, because on the bootleg tapes, he doesn't say much. When you have the pictures… certainly in Twickenham, we struggled to find any shots of Ringo smiling."

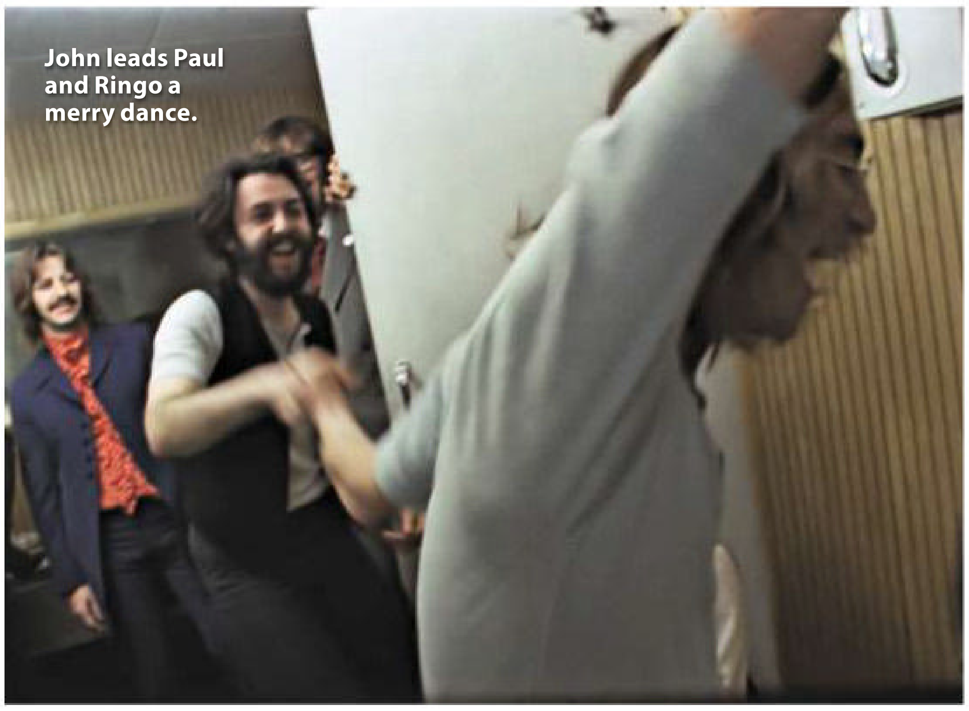
Whatever his mood, it should be noted, Starr's musicianship is dependably astonishing, and his garish-yet-dapper attire marks him out as the most stylish Beatle at the Get Back sessions. "Yeah, yeah, yeah," Jackson enthuses. "Him and [engineer] Glyn Johns, who's a bit of a of a style bunny, too. (*Laughs*) The '60s look so much more fun than the world today."

And what of George Harrison?

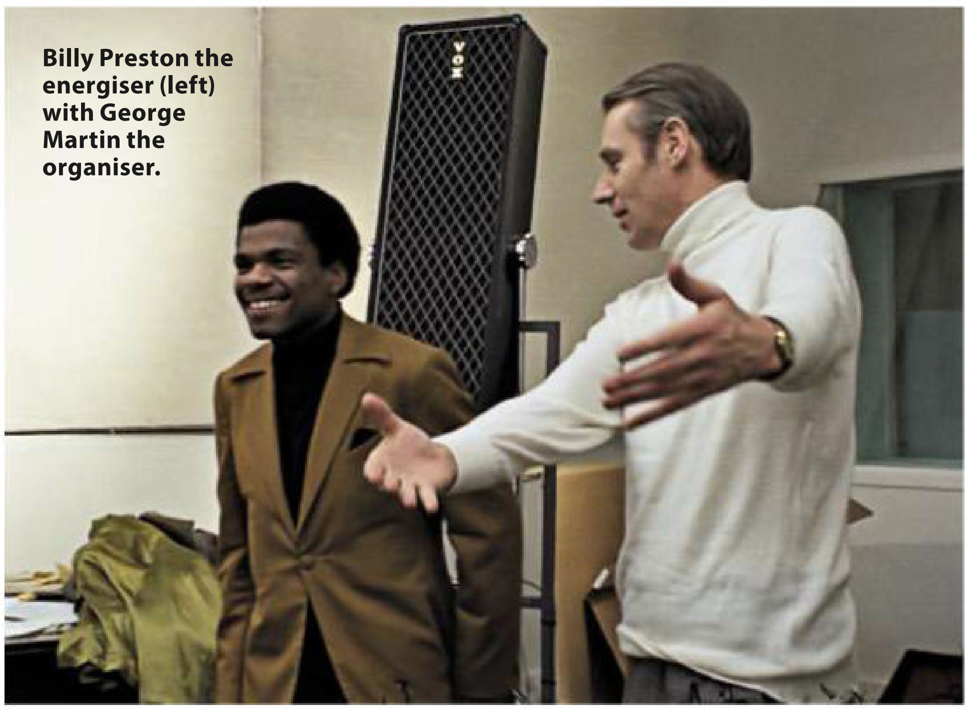
"I understand George almost more than I understand the other Beatles," says Jackson, "because he's very much like a New Zealand male. He's pragmatic. There's not one iota of George that gets swept up in a romantic notion of doing this or that, or the excitement of it all. He's just, 'How are we going to do this? That's not going to work. That's a stupid idea.' And his reasoning is good. You want that kind of guy in your group. I mean, my favourite thing is when they're talking about getting the ocean liner. You know, and that P&O will give them one for free. And he says, 'We can't even get Fender to give us a free amp.' That's one of George's great lines."

A lot of the pathos of Get Back derives, Jackson thinks, from an unresolvable problem. "The Beatles really want to be the Hamburg band again. That's the bittersweet part of the whole story. It's a band who has achieved so much fame that they can really no longer be a band again. They really sort of want to go back to the Top 10 club [in Hamburg] again, or the Cavern. It's not talked about, but you get the sense that the time of their lives that they loved the best was back then. They're trying to chase something that's sort of impossible."

McCartney acknowledges the films' more awkward moments, and the need for them. "I'm glad Peter has put in the little arguments, because it would've looked like a whitewash otherwise," ➢



John leads Paul and Ringo a merry dance.



Billy Preston the energiser (left) with George Martin the organiser.

"I WANTED TO DO IT TRUTHFULLY. YOU COULD EASILY MOUNT AN ARGUMENT THAT THIS MOVIE IS ACTUALLY A LOT TOUGHER THAN LET IT BE." PETER JACKSON

≺ he says now. "But those arguments are really quite mild… A lot of families argue a lot worse than we did. A lot of *bands* argue a lot worse than we did."

JACKSON'S GET BACK FILMS ARE ONLY ONE ASPECT of 2021's Let It Be renaissance. A *Let It Be* album box set put together by Giles Martin includes conversation and outtakes and a new mix of the version of the LP so controversially assembled in early 1970 by Phil Spector. On the 5-CD and expanded vinyl versions, the raw, pre-Spector album named *Get Back*, completed by Glyn Johns in May 1969, finally gets an official release.

Get Back is also the title of a 240-page book – at which point, your writer should declare an interest. In 2019, I was approached by Apple about editing the conversations recorded on those Nagra tape machines. And for the next six months or so, ploughing through 20-odd spiral-bound volumes of precise transcripts and listening to the original tapes, I went through a mountain of music and conversation and did my best to shape it into a coherent story.

As well as hearing The Beatles' musical work, I listened to them ordering breakfast and lunch, talking about what they had seen on TV, and discussing everyone from Zsa Zsa Gabor to Martin Luther King. I found everything from a cod-German version of Get Back ("Geht raus nach deinem Haus!"), to Lennon enthusing to Harrison about Allen Klein, the American impresario who would soon take control of Apple, repulse Paul, and thereby seal The Beatles' fate ("he knows me as much as you do – incredible guy," said John). Going through the sessions' more painful moments was almost as fascinating and moving as eventually seeing them on-screen; hearing the first stirrings of so many songs was an amazing pleasure.

As I read and listened, I got the same impression as Peter Jackson – that the received understanding of the Let It Be period had long since departed from a complex and nuanced reality. For instance, if you see *Abbey Road* as some kind of spectacular return to form, it's worth bearing in mind how much of its music originated at these earlier sessions. It's clear, moreover, that once The Beatles reconvened after Twickenham in the basement studio at Apple's Savile Row headquarters on January 21, there was a huge creative and emotional upswing. Some of this was traceable to Billy Preston, the virtuosic keyboardist who adds so much to the music they proceed to make. But there was also a sense of the four Beatles suddenly feeling at home, and re-finding their bond. "You're working so well together – you're looking at each other, you're seeing each other, you're… just *happening*," said George Martin, who became a more noticeable presence at the sessions.

What Martin saw is conclusively illustrated by the Get Back films' 45-minute finale. When they finally play the show they'd debated since January 2, it's January 30, on the rooftop of Apple's offices. Jackson presents most of what happens in split-screen, divided between the group (plus Preston) and its performance, the mayhem on the street below, and the hilarious efforts of three police officers to call everything to a halt. His rendering of this most familiar occasion makes it newly thrilling. Apart from anything else, it confirms what a brilliant musical unit they remained, to the end.

"Like it had happened thousands of times throughout our playing career, there we were," says McCartney. "Each one of us knew exactly what we had to do. And we knew we'd enjoy it, the minute we locked in… the minute the song was counted in, we all joined in with… (*pause*)… a great vigour and verve (*laughs*). We loved what we were doing. Every time we played together, everything else was forgotten. We were just the band, playing together. And it was always something special."

THAT MUCH IS TRUE, BUT THERE IS OBVIOUSLY a bit more to what the cameras and tape recorders captured in 1969, and what is about to be released to the world. Get Back is full of so many revelations partly because no group has ever been filmed so intimately; the crucial thing is that the group in question are the most accomplished, fascinating band there has ever been, which makes just about every moment completely compelling.

Paul McCartney, for one, sounds like he is still marvelling at a lot of what he has seen. Like the precise moment that Get Back – the song that, advertised as "The Beatles as nature intended", would reach Number 1 (US and UK) in April 1969 – came into the world.

"Peter and I were in quite good contact," he says, "because he would talk to me and Ringo to get the sort of realistic Beatle perspective. And he sent me a thing: 'Did you have the song written before you came in the studio?' I said, 'No. We didn't. It kind of came out of a jam. We just sort of made it up.' And he said, 'I've got this little bit of film.' There's me, in the rehearsal room, and I think I'm just clonking on the bass – (*sings*) 'Dong-chucka-dong-chucka-dong-chucka', making a little rhythm. And then I start something that turns into Get Back.

"I knew we'd jammed it, and I knew we'd kicked it around. But seeing the actual moment when a melody emerges from a little bit of rhythmic noise – it was fabulous for me. Anybody I know who's seen this says that. That's what's amazing: the intimacy. You get a free ticket to the room The Beatles are doing it in. The room where it *happened*."

Heavyweight New York manager Allen Klein, opinion-divider.

Top two stills from The Beatles: Get Back film. © 2020 Apple Corps Ltd. All Rights Reserved., Mirrorpix

THE LONG AND WINDING ROAD

GLYN JOHNS and **GILES MARTIN** reflect on *Let It Be*, the album, and its 52-year struggle to become the best version of itself. "There's a sense all the way through of The Beatles sounding uncertain," hears **DANNY ECCLESTON**.

HALFWAY THROUGH THE BEATLES' STINT AT Apple Studios in January 1969, as they bumbled agreeably through versions of new songs and rock'n'roll favourites, inching to some kind of conclusion on a project that was never more than half-conceived, engineer-producer Glyn Johns had a bright idea.

"I decided one day that what they were doing was fascinating," Johns tells MOJO today. "Not just because of the music, but the way they were interacting with each other, and I was a fly on the wall. I thought, Fuck me, how fortunate am I to be in the room watching the four most famous people in the world and how wonderful it would be to show that on a record?"

Johns left 3 Savile Row that evening with the tapes of the day's work. On the way home, he stopped off at Olympic studios in Barnes and ensconced himself in the mix room.

"So I knocked out a rough mix of what I thought the idea should be, with false starts and conversation around the songs, then the following day I had four acetates cut, gave them to each member of the band."

This was, in a sense, the very first incarnation of *Let It Be* – fated to be considered The Last Beatles Album. Arguably, it was also the truest to what had been Paul McCartney's agenda from the start: that the project would catapult The Beatles back to where they once belonged, eyeball-to-eyeball, rediscovering the genius for instant collaboration that had palled since their retirement as a live group and the solo missions that had characterised the *White Album* sessions. Johns, too, had high hopes for it.

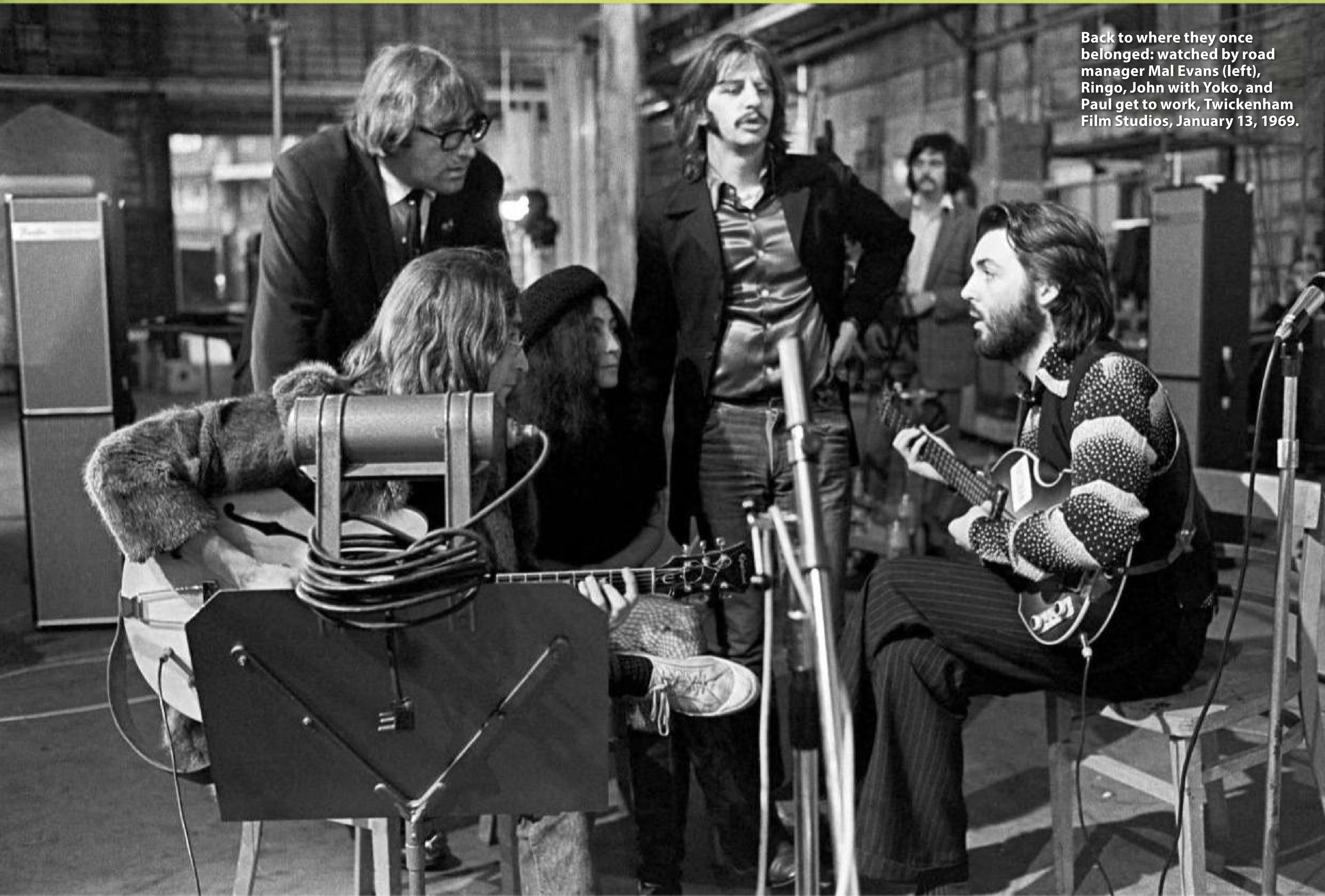
"They all came back the next day," he says, "and said, to a man, 'Fuck off.' They hated it."

IT WAS NOT THE FIRST, NOR WOULD IT BE THE LAST obstacle placed between the music The Beatles made in January 1969 and the world. From the start, Johns was a witness to the fruitless debates surrounding the live concert that distracted the group in Twickenham, including the aborted plan to sail a pre-packed audience to Libya ("Sounded a bit extravagant to me").

Johns was also present for the spat that led to Harrison's walk-out. "We all – and I'm pretty sure it was me who instigated this – got out of the room when it kicked off," he recalls. "Because it was none of our fucking business frankly." Yet he remains in the camp that plays down the incident's role in The Beatles' eventual split. "That was absolute bollocks," he insists. "Four blokes who work together had a disagreement. The only thing that made it unusual is that it was The Beatles."

Even the group's subsequent move into Apple's basement studio following peacemaking meetings with Harrison was fraught, as the recording setup designed by Apple Electronics tech guru 'Magic Alex' Mardas was exposed for the farrago it was.

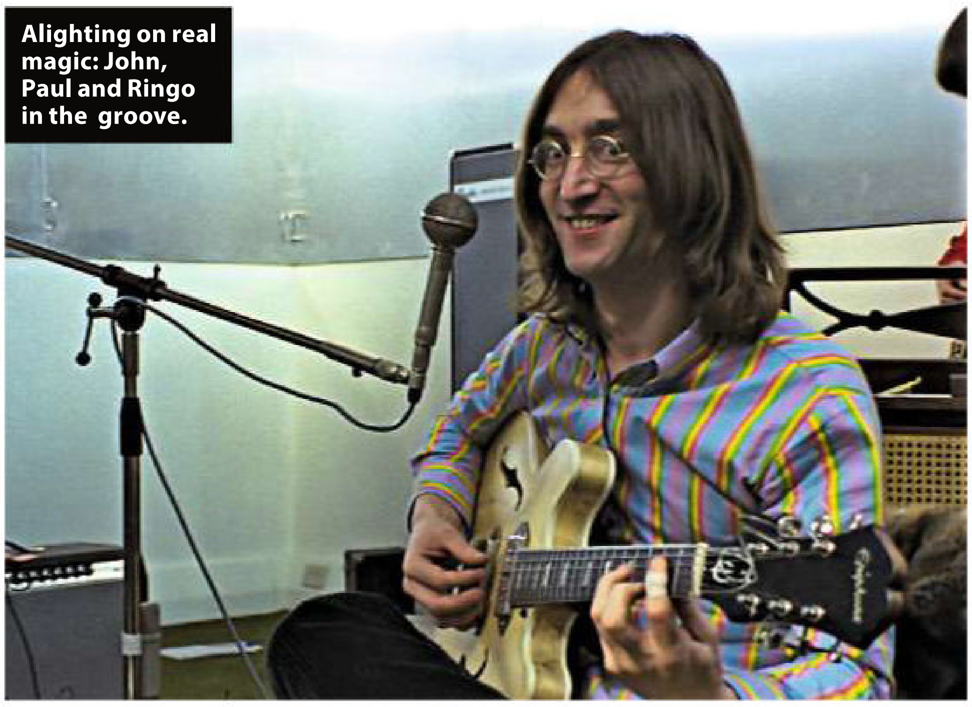
"I remember going to check it out with George one evening ➢



Back to where they once belonged: watched by road manager Mal Evans (left), Ringo, John with Yoko, and Paul get to work, Twickenham Film Studios, January 13, 1969.

Ethan A. Russell /©Apple Corps Ltd.

Alighting on real magic: John, Paul and Ringo in the groove.



A more pensive George, Apple Studio, 3 Savile Row, January 25.

"GET BACK IS LIKE DATE NIGHT. THE BEATLES ARE TRYING TO BRING SOME SPICE BACK INTO THEIR MARRIAGE."
GILES MARTIN

< when we'd finished at Twickenham," says Johns, "and realising that Alex had done his marvellous thing of tricking everyone into thinking he knew what he was doing. He was such an unbelievable fraud. The console he built looked like something out of Buck Rogers. It was just laughable. It was 8-track, right. And he thought, '8-track… we need 8 speakers!' And they were all the size of a ham sandwich. George got really pissed off that I was being so critical, I think because he'd instigated the whole thing."

Once Apple Studios had been refitted, under George Martin's direction, with equipment from Abbey Road, The Beatles began actual recording, but when the cameras left on January 31, with Ringo set to start filming The Magic Christian, it was still unclear what they had apart from a handful of arguably 'final' takes taped on the roof and in the basement of 3 Savile Row plus hours of work-in-progress. Meanwhile, as editing of Michael Lindsay-Hogg's documentary entered a period of extended political wrangling, work was already starting in Olympic on material destined for *Abbey Road*.

"Then there was a pause," says Johns. "Months later I get a call from Paul saying, 'Meet John and me at Abbey Road.' I walk in and there's this pile of 2-inch tapes and they say, 'You remember that idea you had? Well we've changed our minds and we want you to do it.' So I said, When do we start and they said, 'We're not gonna be there – it's *your* idea; *you* go and do it.' And I remember suddenly thinking, *Hang on a minute…*"

But Johns's *Get Back* did not see the light of day in mid-1969. Neither did Michael Lindsay-Hogg's film. In July, Johns saw a screening of the latter which Allen Klein, The Beatles' manager since May 8, had flown in for. "Klein got up at the end and said, 'This is absolutely not right,'" Johns recalls. "'I only want to see The Beatles, not anyone else.'"

The following January, with Lennon already 'divorced' from the group, Johns prepared another version of what they were now calling *Let It Be* – after the single marked for release – this time with a version of Lennon's *White Album* offcut Across The Universe (with re-recorded vocal), and a version of Harrison's I Me Mine cut at Abbey Road on January 3 with Ringo and Paul, in situ. But the *Let It Be* that met the world on May 8, 1970, was not Johns's Mk II either; it now came with production and orchestrations by Phil Spector – in favour after his work on Lennon's solo single, Instant Karma!, recorded on January 27. Spector's intervention was most marked on the 'new' tracks and McCartney's ballads, Let It Be and The Long And Winding Road.

Johns's take on Spector's production has not mellowed over time: "terrible"; "disgusting". Reviewers at the time were no more enamoured, Rolling Stone's John Mendelsohn calling attention to The Long And Winding Road's "ex-

APPLES 1003
PLAY
LOUD
INSTANT KARMA!
LENNON/ONO with the Plastic Ono Band
KUM BACK

Apple tech guru and "unbelievable fraud" 'Magic Alex' Mardas (left); producer Phil Spector; (insets) Instant Karma 45 and 'Kum Back' bootleg.

Top left still from The Beatles: Get Back film. © 2020 Apple Corps Ltd. All Rights Reserved. Ethan A. Russell/© Apple Corps Limited.

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travaganza of oppressive mush". Meanwhile, what might have been interpreted as knockabout or improvisational from an active group, showing a less formal side, perhaps, of the godhead, was coloured by the knowledge – widespread at last – of the group's demise. The Beatles were gone and they'd left us with Dig It. Cheers.

ON OCTOBER 13, 2021, 52 YEARS AND CHANGE after he submitted Get Back Mk I, Johns's vision for the album will finally have an official release, in deluxe formats of a *Let It Be* reissue package that includes a remix of the originally-released album by Giles Martin, plus two discs of outtakes and eavesdroppings. It won't be the first the world has heard of it – there were bootlegs in circulation from at least the middle of 1969.

"I went to San Francisco and I took with me, at George [Harrison]'s request, a copy of the album. He wanted me to play a song to [producer] Denny Cordell, for Joe Cocker. I lent this acetate to Denny for 24 hours and during that period it must have got bootlegged. I can't believe it was Denny but somehow it got out."

In 2021, Johns's version remains a bracing listen. Not only is it *audio verité* – these are by no means the slickest takes from the sessions – but there's a real-time feel: if you were told it was a randomly selected, unedited 40 minutes of studio time, you'd be tempted to believe it. It also bears underlining that this is not *Let It Be… Naked* by another name. The 2003 de-Spectorfication of *Let It Be* put together by Abbey Road house hands Allan Rouse, Paul Hicks and Guy Massey, and championed by McCartney, jettisoned Phil Spector's over-arrangements and pieced together supposedly ideal versions of the songs from multiple sources.

Into this mêlée of versions of *Let It Be*, all jostling to be considered 'the one', steps Giles Martin, son of George – reprising the approach he has applied to *Sgt. Pepper*, *The Beatles* (AKA *The White Album*) and *Abbey Road*. When Martin began work on his new mix, he knew he was entering a more than usually controversial realm, with the Spector mixes having historically represented everything wrong about The Beatles' stepchild album, not least for Paul McCartney.

"The first thing I discussed with Paul was that it doesn't really make any sense not to respect the original record, with the Phil Spector productions, and he agreed," Martin tells MOJO. "He did ask me if I could take the harp down at the end of The Long And Winding Road. But that's very difficult to do because it's on the same track as the strings."

Martin found Spector's Wall Of Sound hard to repoint without undermining its foundations. "There's a kind of lo-fi honky compression to it," says Martin. "And if you don't respect that you can easily end up somewhere too schmaltzy, too easy listening. It needs some of that grit in it." In the end, Martin and colleague Sam Okell found themselves trying to more thoroughly integrate what, in the 1970 version, felt bolted-on or slathered over.

"Ultimately," says Martin, "the approach to *Let It Be* is to make it fit together better. Because its creation was so fragmented. As a team, we could approach it in one mind and at one moment. We didn't have a lot of politics to worry about. Or the film to worry about. We just wanted Across The Universe and Dig A Pony to sound more like they belonged on the same record."

DO MARTIN'S OR JOHNS'S VERSIONS MAKE US FEEL differently about *Let It Be*? Certainly, both emphasise the aspect of the project – its invitation to intimacy – that's most appealing. In Martin's mix of Two Of Us, John and Paul are divisible, but only just – two creators reliving a story of their past comradeship. Paying attention to an album you might not have focused on in a while brings self-revelations: this writer did not remember loving Dig A Pony, with George's exquisite guitar solo, *this* much.

Meanwhile, the studio chat on Johns's version and Martin's outtake discs are windows on the Fabs and their process, especially the moment Harrison brings in Something, destined for *Abbey Road* but still to find the perfect end to the "…attracts me like…" line. He and John start bouncing around some options. "Attracts me like a cauliflower?" volunteers Lennon. "Pomegranate," tries Harrison. Giles Martin, having immersed in all the takes and the attendant ➢

Ethan A. Russell / © Apple Corps Limited. Getty

"THIS WAS LIKE YOUR PARENTS GETTING DIVORCED"

Photographer **ETHAN RUSSELL** was there for every day of Let It Be, and it still amazes him: "That they could do what they did under those circumstances is unbelievable."

WHAT GOT ME into Let It Be was that I had shot John and Yoko in 1968, one of the first things I did in London, and they'd liked me. One of those shots, from a contact sheet I took into Apple, made it into the collage inside *The White Album*, which they didn't tell me about but of course I was really excited. I rang John, and mentioned that they'd used my picture and he said, "What do you want, a royalty?"

I knew they were going to be filming in Twickenham because I'd just shot The Rolling Stones' Rock And Roll Circus and I knew Michael Lindsay-Hogg and the crew, so I asked [Beatles tour manager/Apple exec] Neil Aspinall if I could come down and he said, "No, absolutely not. Anyway, David Bailey's going to be down there," which I'm convinced was a complete lie. So I just drove down there and walked on the set. Aspinall's first words to me were, and this is such horseshit, "We've decided to let you come down." So the next day I started shooting. My approach was, 'What would it feel like to be standing right here with The Beatles?'

George's walkout? I didn't see it, but I witnessed the brouhaha. I remember a bunch of hushed whispering and Michael [Lindsay-Hogg] trying to get the story out of them with this pen mike concealed in his top pocket – a real James Bond thing, right? But there was no question that George was unhappy. He looked permanently miserable. And he had a point: what the fuck were they doing getting up at 9am and trying to make a record on a sound stage?

Even when they moved to Apple – and it was better there and Billy Preston made a big difference – it's still this tiny basement room, and you've got three or four cameras floating around and I'm there and Michael's there and Yoko's there and Linda's there and Heather's there. And Yoko's going through this horrible experience with the British press: ageist, racist shit. I mean, it's stressed. That they could do what they did under those circumstances is unbelievable. I mean, starting with a bunch of not-really songs and 30 days later playing them on the roof of Apple? I mean, who does that? Certainly not The Rolling Stones!

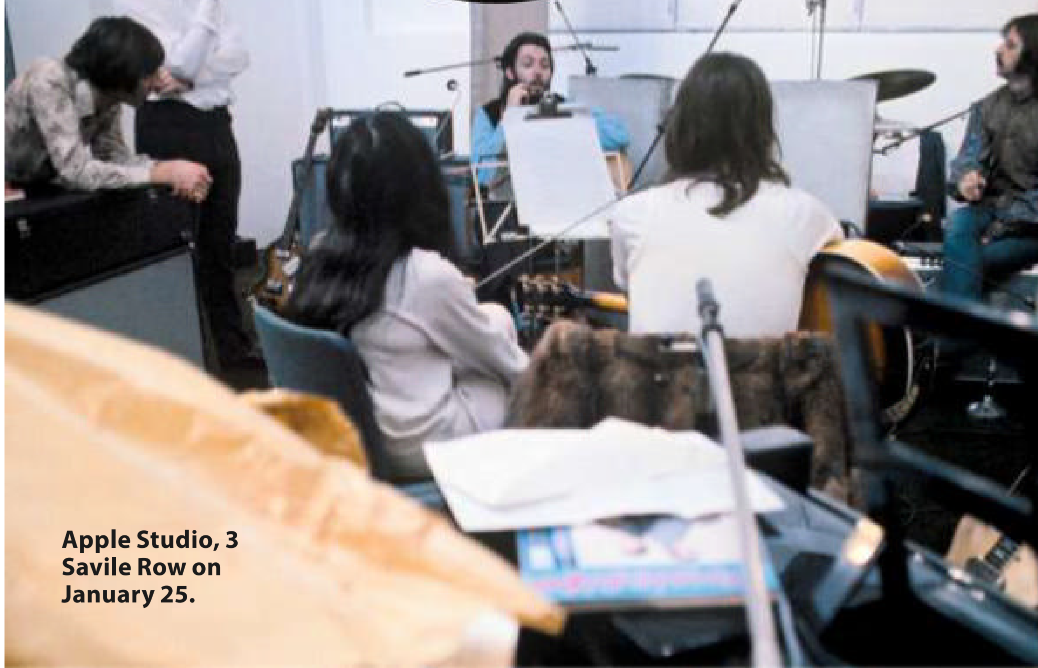
Shooting the roof gig was an experience. I realised that from the front, I couldn't get them all in, even with a 24mm lens. So I had to get as far away from them as possible. So I had one leg over the scaffolding pole at the lip of the roof – after that, it's straight down. Earlier on, I'd taken my pictures to Apple and projected them in Pete Brown's office. Out of that slideshow came the idea of doing a book and putting it with the album – 160 pages with transcribed speech from the film. Unfortunately, it wasn't well made – the book fell apart quite quickly – and it didn't happen in the States; Capitol wouldn't pay for it.

Looking back, I kind of think about Let It Be similarly to how I feel about Altamont. In the '60s it had felt everything was going up and up. Neither Let It Be or Altamont had been well enough set up, but the ethic was you just kept going.

And it's easy to forget how much we were *dependent* on The Beatles. They defined our world, and this was a bit like your parents getting divorced. It's like, "No, no, no, get over yourselves, because you've got *me* to look after!" But why did they have to look after *us*? When had they ever signed up for that?

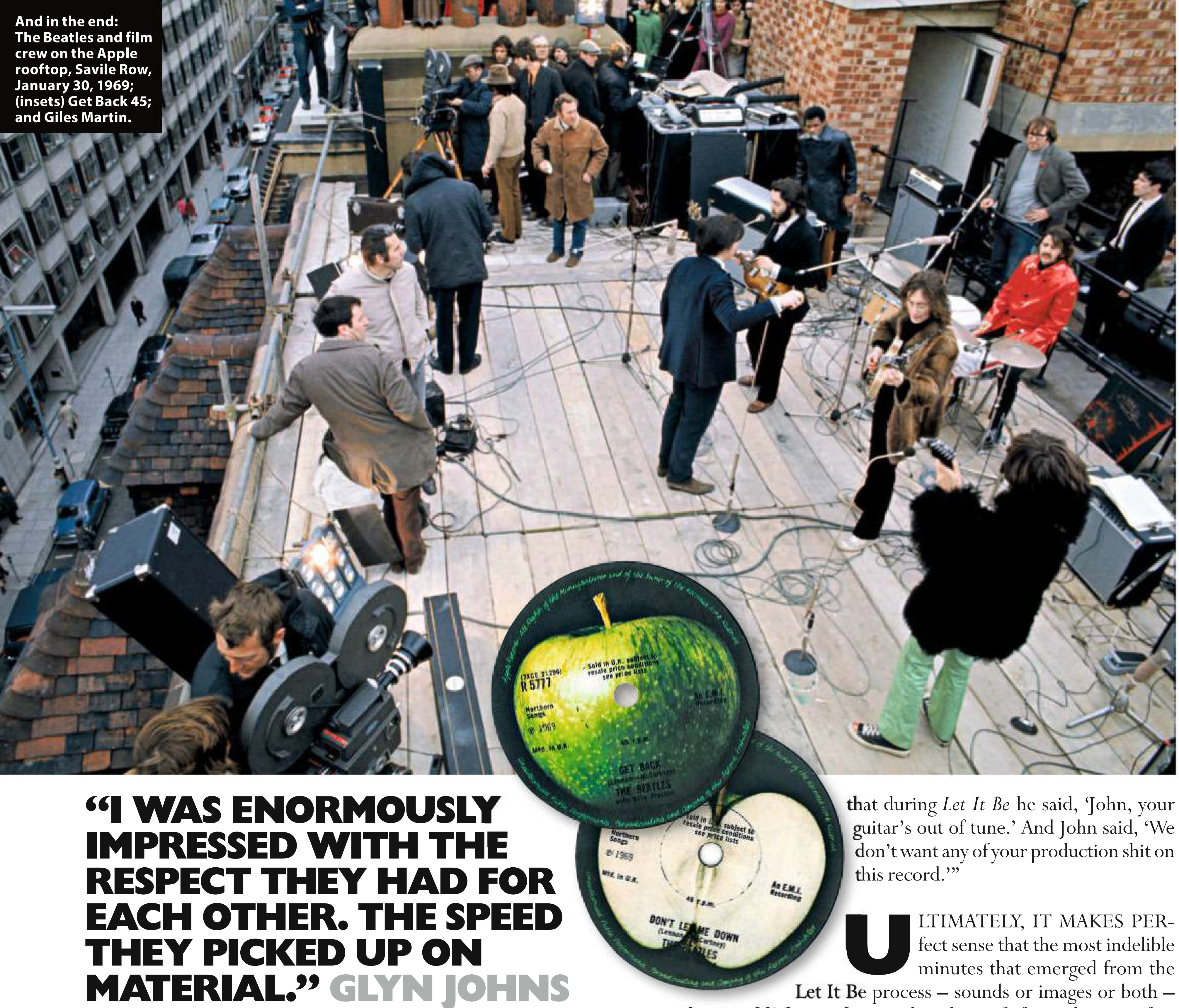
Ethan Russell's photographs, along with shots by Linda McCartney, illustrate the Get Back book.

"MY APPROACH WAS, 'WHAT WOULD IT FEEL LIKE TO BE STANDING RIGHT HERE WITH THE BEATLES?'"



Apple Studio, 3 Savile Row on January 25.

And in the end: The Beatles and film crew on the Apple rooftop, Savile Row, January 30, 1969; (insets) Get Back 45; and Giles Martin.



"I WAS ENORMOUSLY IMPRESSED WITH THE RESPECT THEY HAD FOR EACH OTHER. THE SPEED THEY PICKED UP ON MATERIAL." GLYN JOHNS

chat, feels there is a broad sense of George being locked out of the Paul and John love-in ("At one point he actually says, 'I don't want any of my bloody songs to be played on this thing. They'll be ruined.'"), but here is a moment where creative camaraderie is restored. It's very much what Johns – who really was there – remembers.

"Overall, I was enormously impressed with the way they communicated with each other," says Johns. "The respect they had for each other. The speed they picked up on material that was being offered. And Billy Preston – stunning, and great for them to have there."

Martin agrees that Preston – recruited by Harrison and brought into the studio from January 22 to the end – made all the difference to *Let It Be*. "Get Back is like date night," he says. "The Beatles are trying to bring some spice back into their marriage."

And Billy is what – the fluffer? "Apart from being a brilliant musician, Billy is what the project needed all along – an audience. Before Billy comes they didn't have anyone to perform to. Because, normally, they were performing for my dad."

The absence of George Martin, The Beatles' producer since June 1962, was the first thing Glyn Johns noted on arrival at Twickenham on January 2: "Within an hour I was being asked how they should start a song. I was a bit, 'Fuuucking hell!'" In Jackson's Get Back films, Johns is unignorable in his Austin Powers threads ("I was obviously going through a circus period!" he laughs) but the lack of Martin's oversight on *Let It Be* was a key influence on its more freeform – some would say ill-disciplined – ambience.

Ethan A. Russell/©Apple Corps Ltd., Alex Lake

"My dad was a blueprint man, always was," says Giles Martin. "The biggest argument we ever had was over the measurement of Pimms. He told me once that during *Let It Be* he said, 'John, your guitar's out of tune.' And John said, 'We don't want any of your production shit on this record.'"

ULTIMATELY, IT MAKES PERFECT sense that the most indelible minutes that emerged from the Let It Be process – sounds or images or both – are the 40-odd The Beatles spend on the roof of 3 Savile Row. After all, it is the live show, after a fashion, that the whole thing was designed to work towards. There is suddenly adrenaline and focus, and a set of killer performances. You can hear one – the first rooftop take of Don't Let Me Down – on the Deluxe and Super Deluxe versions of the upcoming reissue; it's arguably the best thing The Beatles did in the whole of January '69. Viewers of Peter Jackson's Get Back films will have the benefit of new Giles Martin sound mixes of the whole set; a Rooftop CD or LP might emerge at a later date.

"There's a sense all through *Let It Be*," says Martin, "of The Beatles sounding uncertain: 'Are we recording or rehearsing?' Even at Apple that's the case. Until you get to the rooftop. When you're on the rooftop there's no doubt – this is a performance. The rooftop is more like a Beatles recording than any of the studio recordings. It's more aggressive." It also sounds amazing.

"And that's a credit to Glyn. I'm not sure, if we recorded a band on the roof here at Abbey Road with all the equipment we have, whether we'd do as good a recording."

On audio from the day of the rooftop recording, Michael Lindsay-Hogg can be heard saying: "On Glyn's head rests an £8,000 operation." No pressure?

"I didn't feel it. At all," says Johns. "I knew they were going to be great. I just had to put a microphone in front of them. Piece of cake!"

Is it arguable that two songs played on the rooftop – Get Back and Don't Let Me Down; the constituents of that April 1969 single – were worth the whole month's work, maybe even the subsequent grief?

"Yeah!" says Glyn Johns, his eyes lighting up. And then he grins: "Definitely worth 8,000 quid…"

MOJO FILTER

YOUR GUIDE TO THE MONTH'S BEST MUSIC

EDITED BY **JENNY BULLEY** jenny.bulley@bauermedia.co.uk

Joni
ARCHI
NEIL YOUNG
CARNEGIE HALL
1970
STEREO
BOOTS
NANCY SINATRA
These Boots Are Made For Walkin'
So Long, Babe • Day Tripper
Flowers on the Wall • In My Room
As Tears Go By • Lies • I Move Around
Run For Your Life • and others
The fabulous
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DAMGOOD560LP

> “He got so high that he started to eat a vinyl copy of The Beach Boys’ *Greatest Hits.*”

ANDREW MALE ADMIRES A GREAT IRISHMAN. BOOKS PAGE 108

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Ghost on the highway

The erstwhile Philly one-man band's fifth album sees Adam Granduciel still following the dream. But how does it feel? asks **Keith Cameron**. Illustration by **Janelle Barone**.

The War On Drugs

★★★★

I Don't Live Here Anymore

ATLANTIC. CD/DL/LP

THE WAR ON DRUGS
I DON'T LIVE HERE ANYMORE

AT SIX shows in a six-week period during the spring of 2012, The War On Drugs performed The Waterboys' A Pagan Place. The song, a key prototype for what Mike Scott called "the big music", was a folk hymnal propelled by sheer aspirational force into a kind of pacific call to arms. One year into the touring cycle for the second War On Drugs album, *Slave Ambient*, here was an indicator of where Adam Granduciel's vision was headed: towards his own kind of big music.

Slave Ambient's follow-up, *Lost In The Dream*, delivered on that premise: epic soundtracks for traversing interior landscapes, motorik-grooved road-rock for the EV generation. Reflecting on its success in 2014's Album Of The Year lists, Granduciel explained to this writer the breakthrough came from seeking something "less esoteric. Any artist I grew up loving, be it The Velvet Underground, or Bob Dylan, or George Harrison, or Kraftwerk, had momentous songs. I wanted my album to have songs [that] transcend time or style or taste."

Lost In The Dream's impact rewarded Granduciel, a studio hermit whose perfectionism caused him a mental breakdown, with a major record deal from Atlantic. 2017's *A Deeper Understanding* was denser, shinier, bigger in every way. Its first single, Thinking Of A Place, ran to 11 minutes; its tour cycle ended with TWOD playing arenas and winning the Grammy for Best Rock Album. A product of Philadelphia's underground scene, Granduciel had come a long way since the days he and former bandmate Kurt Vile would jam for hours and study Bruce Springsteen. He now lived in Los Angeles, with his partner, actor Krysten Ritter; the couple would soon have a son, Bruce. But so immaculate was *A Deeper Understanding* in design and realisation, its vast expanses felt oddly like a dead end. Could further mileage down that particular road possibly teach Granduciel more about what was gained, or lost, and at what price?

It's a dilemma *I Don't Live Here Anymore* acknowledges at the outset. In the grand tradition of American seekers, opening song Living Proof finds him standing "on the corner", where "they're building up my block". He sounds bereaved: "Maybe I've been gone too long." Instead of the multi-layered melodies and streamlined curves that have characterised Granduciel's efforts at making one man sound like a band, the song presents an actual band, playing with immaculate restraint, initially just Granduciel on acoustic guitars and Robbie Bennett on piano, before the other players quietly arrive one by one until the six-piece ensemble kicks in on the pivotal lyric: "But I'm rising/And I'm damaged." Granduciel starts an electric solo, which typically would be the signal to really cut loose, but 58 seconds later, it ebbs to a close.

BACK STORY: WALTER'S BASS

- On the track Old Skin, Adam Granduciel is credited with playing "Walter Becker's old bass" – as in the late Steely Dan legend. "After he passed away most of Walter's extensive collection went up for sale," Granduciel says. "I was lucky enough to get his late-'60s Pelham Blue Gibson Melody Maker bass – a pretty rare bass, especially in that colour. I used it to demo basically every song on the album and I used my original take for Old Skin. It has a very dark, punchy sound that always sits perfectly in my home recordings."

Julien's Auctions/MEGA

Living Proof is an auspicious opening gambit (Springsteen has a song of the same name, about a lost soul who finds redemption upon becoming a father). And although no other song is so sparely arranged, it's indicative of a fresh intent and clarity, as if Granduciel was now pre-choreographing his compositions as opposed to agonisingly compiling takes in the edit phase. That applies even to the lavish title track, a six-minute slab of transcendence that evokes those other harbingers of the big music Simple Minds, specifically their Jimmy Iovine/Robin Clark-enabled stadium soul anthems like All The Things She Said, with Jess Wolfe and Holly Laessig from Lucius providing female vocal lustre here.

> "This glorious record suggests the heartland is wherever you choose."

Such arch '80s signifiers will always taint TWOD to some ears, yet they're intrinsic to a person born in 1979 whose first album purchase was Phil Collins' *...But Seriously*; the juddering melodrama of I Don't Wanna Wait opens with the rhythmic blips of the Prophet 6, a recent upgrade on the 5, the synth that defined a decade. Part of TWOD's appeal is how Granduciel decontaminates decadent textures via his rueful chord sequences and a crushing appetite for existential doubt, undercut by the occasional sprinkling of cheese. So while that title track has an opening riff reminiscent of Kim Carnes' Bette Davis Eyes, and features the lyric, "When we went to see Bob Dylan/We danced to Desolation Row", soon enough it's pondering whether life is "dying in slow motion", and concludes with the keynote sing-along: "We're just walking through this darkness on our own."

Even when the music's sunny, Granduciel sensibly keeps an eye on the forecast and a weatherproof jacket on the backseat. Amid ascendant chords close to The Edge, Change finds him "driving on the west side again", where rain inevitably "keeps pourin' down". Harmonia's Dream is the equivalent of Under The Pressure on *Lost In The Dream*, heartland Krautrockin' nirvana. In his heightened euphoric state, Granduciel becomes a spectral manifestation of the sounds – "I'm gone like a light that can't be seen" – as three Juno-60 synth peals drip like *sonnenschein* into the psychic tank and we're surging across the luminous plateau, alone but not lonely, James Elkington's guitar soloing into a gilded eternity.

If his draughtsman's eye for detail feels keener than ever, so too does Granduciel's way with big heartstring tugs. Previously he might have shied from the transparent empathy – if not the Dylan-adjacent melody – of Rings Around My Father's Eyes, the second song to mention "father" after Old Skin, the album's emotional fulcrum which rises from bare piano to urge "Let's suffer through the change", then fires into full band country-soul lamentation like Side 4 of *The River*, all brimstone harmonica and Hammond.

It ends with a revival: Occasional Rain, an efflorescent chorale of arpeggiating guitars, where the notion of Johnny Marr leading The Heartbreakers puts Adam in whimsical mood. "I'm living down by an old par 3/You know I'll be playing," he winks, before the clouds mass and he confesses, perhaps to an old pal, perhaps just himself: "I got swept up in a world so strange." Yet even as the heavens open, our weatherbeaten hero stands tall and trudges on through the rough – "Live the loneliness of your life/Keep on moving at your pace/Ain't the sky just shades of grey" – as the notes tumble around him and into the fade.

Three years in the making, with over a dozen sessions spread across seven studios, from New York to LA, *I Don't Live Here Anymore* is the most grounded War On Drugs record and the best: a calm space amid a world in collapse. So maybe you can't go home again – but this glorious record suggests the heartland is wherever you choose to make it. With the big music, there's always more.

Philadelphia
No Direction
Home

HAWKWIND
SOMNIA

Hawkwind

★★★★

Somnia

CHERRY RED. CD/DL/LP

The space rock pioneers' 34th album. And it's a belter.

Hawkwind may have been around for over 50 years but some of the riffs on *Somnia* have surely been reverberating throughout the universe since the Big Bang. On the 10-minute trance-out Unsomnia – essentially a reworking of Can's Mother Sky – Dave Brock (who has just celebrated his 80th birthday) goes wah wah crazy, and his guitar and synth work is inspired throughout. The album addresses sleep, dreams and altered states of mind, and so its musical remit is correspondingly wide, encompassing spacey electronica, acoustic raga guitars and even some mutated trap beats. Like a grizzled prophet, Brock delivers a reality check on China Blues, recasting the sci-fi safety drill of Sonic Attack into dire warnings about the pandemic. On a lighter note, he has also written a cosmic pop earworm, the aptly titled I Can't Get You Out Of My Mind.

Mike Barnes

Howlin Rain

★★★★

The Dharma Wheel

SILVER CURRENT. CD/DL/LP

After 2018's *The Alligator Bride*, a new high from Ethan Miller. Scarlet Rivera guests!

Ethan Miller is now probably one of the pre-eminent adventurers in Californian rock, tackling as he does various spiritual configurations of psych, roots, sludge, punk and all points in between with Comets On Fire, Heron Oblivion and Feral Ohms. For the past 15 years, the purest and most accessible distillation of Miller's vision has been his albums fronting Howlin Rain: this is the sixth, and quite possibly the best. *The Dharma Wheel* is a cosmic good-time record in the tradition of '70s Dead, The Chris Robinson Brotherhood (that band's Adam MacDougall is prominent here on trademark squelchy keys), canyons folk rock, Humble Pie and much else in your vinyl collection. Sprawling jams never overshadow memorable tunes; a very agile rhythm section keeps the grooves more propulsive than on some previous sets; elusive Rolling Thunder fiddler Scarlet Rivera guests, prominently; and Miller flexes his guitar hero bona fides on the tremendous 16-minute title track. A classic rock record, in all senses.

John Mulvey

HOWLIN RAIN

Vivien Goldman

★★★★

Next Is Now

YOUTH SOUNDS/CADIZ ENTERTAINMENT. CD/DL/LP

Musician, writer and She-Punk educator releases debut solo album.

The release in 2016 of Vivien Goldman's *Resolutionary*, a compilation of early-'80s material she recorded with such luminaries as Keith Levene and Adrian Sherwood, plus her book Revenge Of The She-Punks, seems to have set off a chain reaction culminating in her full, shimmering solo debut. Produced by punky reggae collaborator Youth, it is a moving statement on love, exile, struggle and companionship, shifting from lilting lovers dub to piano-led torch song. Most striking are the tracks Vertigo and Driverless Car, where Goldman's voice loops through a vocoder, Laurie Anderson-style, exploring emotional hinterlands in a kind of electronic art-pop. Extraordinary too is the song Home, with spoken word memories of Finchley Road and hearing Public Enemy for the first time. Now, she sings, with a sense of musical liberation, "home is everywhere, it's just in the air."

Lucy O'Brien

Various

★★★

Join The Ritual

JAGJAGUWAR. CD/DL/LP

Indie label's silver anniversary celebrations continue with covers album.

Founded in Bloomington, Indiana in 1996, Jagjaguwar mark their quarter-century with this selection of cover versions, each one a formative influence on the nascent label. The result is a pleasingly idiosyncratic scrapbook of (mainly) '90s music from their past and present roster and other heady friends. Highlights include Bruce Hornsby's impressive piano detonation of Dinosaur Jr's Feel The Pain, The Besnard Lakes' effectively malignant take on Slint's Good Morning, Captain, the brainfuls of fun had by They Hate Change with Stereolab's The Seeming And The Meaning, and Angel Olsen finding the languid chill in Smog's Cold Blooded Old Times. If there are occasional lapses in the cosmic connection suggested by the title, it's still a resonant exercise in honouring the ancestors (S Carey covering Low's Weight Of Water, Jamila Woods paying tribute to Tracy Chapman's Fast Car) while celebrating a distance well-travelled.

Victoria Segal

ORIGINAL MOTION PICTURE SOUNDTRACK
Zola

Mica Levi

★★★★

Zola

A24/INVADA. DL/LP

London-based musician/composer creates another incredible film score.

The story of Zola began as an internet folk tale, a 2015 viral Twitter thread by Aziah 'Zola' King about a nightmare trip to Florida with a stripper called Jessica who also brought along her boyfriend and her pimp. That thread then became a Rolling Stone feature by David Kushner and is now a feature film by Janicza Bravo, who retells Zola's tale as a character-led black comedy with a sinister edge. By contrast, Levi scores the film as something midway between fairytale and horror, with music box and harp glissandos giving way to distorted Bernard Herrmann strings, fuzzed-out trap rhythms and heavy brass drones. It's soundtrack as both narrative and emotional subtext, Levi's cues clueing us into the film's time-worn narrative themes and the ever-present threat that accompanies them.

Andrew Male

Parquet Courts

★★★★

Sympathy For Life

ROUGH TRADE. CD/DL/LP

Punk-evoking quartet deliver slimmed-down *Sandinista!*

Parquet Courts: a galvanised jumble of influences.

THESE TEXAS-BROOKLYN firebrands were fixing to save US alt-rock, before tension between co-frontmen Andrew Savage and Austin Brown, then global events, prevented them from clinching the deal. On 2018's *Wide Awake!*, the chalk-and-cheese duality served up a creatively crackling split between politico-punk/new wave (Savage) and dubby otherness (Brown). Here, there's movement every which way, like The Clash in 1980, yet across just 10 tracks, as Brown modernises via Korgs and e-drums, and Savage, who wrote nocturnally in Italy after days spent 'trippy lifting' (pumping iron on LSD), chases "Can, Canned Heat & This Heat". Certainly, the anti-capitalist Plant Life and Black Lives Matter meditation Marathon Of Anger feel convincingly Krautrocking, and broadly groove supplants anthemics, but in amongst the jumble of influences, trad indie-guitar Parquet remains: in, say, the early Go-Betweens-y Just Shadows, and the galvanising lyrics of collective consciousness – written pre-pandemic, but wonderfully inspiring for late 2021.

Andrew Perry

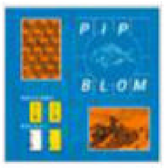
Pip Blom

★★★★

Welcome Break

HEAVENLY. CD/DL/LP

Hazy, tune-drenched indie-rock of distinction marks Dutch quartet's second LP.



The euphonious songs of *Welcome Break* arrive with a poise suggesting not a drop of sweat was spilt in their composition, as if nagging tunefulness and a certain insouciant charm were supernatural gifts Pip Blom – the group's eponymous singer/guitarist – was born with. The latter quality is telegraphed by Blom's drawl, wandering waywardly around her melodies, suggesting the dry understatement of Courtney Barnett, who feels like a dominant influence. The sheer charisma of bold, clanging anthems like I Know I'm Not Easy To Like and Keep It Together shine out, chaotic energy and see-saw refrains evoking the hazy tangle of Chastity Belt and the laser-focused discipline of The Strokes. Indeed, Blom's buoyant indie-rock – a perfect vehicle for the everyday anxieties that power her songs – quickly proves hard to resist.

Stevie Chick

Rise and reverberate: My Morning Jacket, lucky to be alive.

Austin Nelson

A perfect circle

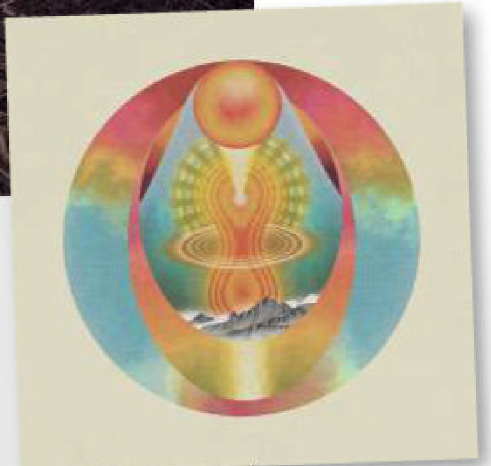
Returned after six years' hiatus, the Louisvillians' magic glows brighter than ever. By **Stevie Chick.**

My Morning Jacket

★★★★

My Morning Jacket

ATO. CD/DL/LP



INTERVIEWS FROM 2019 – when My Morning Jacket played their first live shows after going on hiatus following 2015's *The Waterfall* (2020's *Waterfall II* was assembled from its predecessor's offcuts) – suggest Jim James had put his long-running group on ice because he felt stultified by the familiar. The solo albums that followed certainly gave his paradigm a firm shake: soulful psychedelic excursions, a collaboration with the Louisville Orchestra, an album of garage-style, first-thought-is-best-thought rock'n'roll.

There was, however, little doubt James would eventually reunite My Morning Jacket; some bonds are too deeply wired to deny. Their eponymous ninth finds James returning from his wanderings to home-base, and perhaps, like T.S. Eliot, truly knowing it for the first time, unabashedly rejoicing in the strengths of this group, these players. The tracks often find space for exultant instrumental codas, In Color, Never In The Real World and Lucky To Be Alive all closing with ecstatic guitar colloquies between James and Carl Broemel. I Never Could Get Enough, meanwhile, drifts out to the horizon on an elegiac tide of ambient synths, supernatural guitar and graceful rhythms that could eddy on for eternity.

But while several of My Morning Jacket's tracks sail purposefully beyond the seven-minute mark, a keen economy and balance are always at play. An expert rejuvenator of classic rock tropes, James is never yoked to the past, weaving his influences into a cosmic Americana perfectly of its own time. His solo albums engaged with the turbulent political moment more confidently than before, and that's the songwriter at skilful work here. The evils of the internet age are a recurrent motif, though any curmudgeonliness is leavened by the wry tenor of James's take on a musician's woes in the streaming era on Lucky To Be Alive ("Technology came and stole my living again," he rues in its opening line).

James's theme bites deeper on The Devil's In The Details, its sombre, gauzy space-folk ruminating on late-era capitalism's rending of the fabric of America. A vision of a nation where the mall is heaven, where materialism and its distractions mask grand injustices, and cosmetics from Sephora will cure all ills, the polemic is lent subtlety by James' haunting vocal. And when he briefly punctures the illusion with imagery of impoverished children sent to war while the offspring of privilege are "safely sound asleep", it's a powerful, jarring moment of clarity.

Despite this bleak peak, the overriding mood of *My Morning Jacket* is one of joy, the deft chug of Least Expected intertwining a story of regenerative love with a message of triumph over intolerance, James imbibing the gravitas of Roy Orbison as he croons, "I wish everybody could agree" during In Color. These are simple messages, delivered earnestly, but the magic of this group has always been their ability to translate the elemental into the transcendental. It is a miracle they pull off frequently on *My Morning Jacket*, with confidence and inspiration, every moment a fresh beginning.

"We let improv take its course"

Jim James speaks to **Stevie Chick.**

What brought My Morning Jacket back together again?

"We did four shows in 2019 that really lit the spark again and made us want to get back in the studio. We really felt that old-time magic – that natural, wonderful feeling of creating music with friends. We didn't really have a time frame or pressure – we just went in the studio and started knocking around tons of ideas I had written over the last few years, and let improv take its course, as well. It was literally just the five of us in the studio – no producer, no engineer – so we got to just focus on our energy as a group in this beautiful way that took us back to how it all started."

What did your solo work allow that couldn't be accommodated within My Morning Jacket?

"They're just different worlds. For reasons I don't fully understand, songs will tell me where they want to go. I enjoy playing music with lots of different people and my solo albums give me the ability to do that, whereas My Morning Jacket is the sound created by the five of us, the circle of us being together."

What inspired the remarkable The Devil's In The Details?

"It's about the confusion and isolation that capitalism, greed, social media and television have woven into our lives – that so many people feel more at home online or at the shopping mall than out in nature or really connecting with people. Almost everything evil that we encounter, such as war, is born of the greed of the few who control everything and keep wanting more and more, and it's driving us and the planet closer and closer to destruction."

What made you want to make this, your ninth album, an eponymous record?

"I have always just *loved* the power of the eponymous records. There is something so cool and mysterious and powerful about it – just the name of the artist and nothing else – poof! Magic. And it felt fitting, since we had been gone awhile, and had not been sure if we would come back or not, and it felt so good to get to make another record. Just let the name of the band be the title, and the sound of the music can speak for itself."

Smile please: Lonely Guest invites you too.

High contrast

Tricky invites guests such as Idles' Joe Talbot to join him in 'exile'. By **Andrew Perry**.

Lonely Guest

★★★★

Lonely Guest

FALSE IDOLS. CD/DL/LP

THE LAST time Adrian Nicholas Matthews Thaws, AKA Tricky, went out under another alias, he was sitting pretty. It was 1996, and the wayward Massive Attack rapper had unexpectedly hit the Top 5 with a solo debut, *Maxinquaye*. Still not conclusively signed to major label Island, he could break the rules, muddying the label's campaign by devising a more collaborative sequel under the *nom de guerre* Nearly God – a satire on the hype then engulfing him – starring Terry Hall and Björk.

Twenty-five years on, now resident in Berlin, Tricky is still the same hyperactive refusenik, self-releasing five albums since 2013, though now very much at the margins – electively so. Ever collaborative (2017's latter-day highlight *Ununiform* briefly reunited him with his *Maxinquaye* foil/partner Martina Topley-Bird), *Lonely Guest* finds him retreating even further into the shadows, as a varied cast of guests, including Joe Talbot from fellow Bristolians Idles and Jamaican legend, the late Lee 'Scratch' Perry, dominate the mike.

For such a peripatetic street artist, lockdown saw Tricky become the stranded expat, the Lonely Guest. After losing Mina Mazy, his daughter by Martina, in May 2019, he'd coped with the bereavement by studio-bingeing to make 2020's *Fall To Pieces*. Suddenly unable to tour it, he responded by plunging back into recording, giving himself and other loyal/respected musicians something to do, albeit remotely.

Lapsed listeners will recognise Tricky's pervasively ornery vibe, but marvel at the absence of stumbling trip-hop beats and impenetrable sonic clutter. The title track ushers in a spare but no less disquieting soundworld, with just the simplest circular keyboard figure (like a children's music box stuck mid-play) and cello-meets-dubstep bass squelches accompanying the frosty coo of Marta Złakowska – his Krakow-born vocal foil.

Arguably the early sampling era's greatest juxtaposer, Tricky brilliantly blends three contrasting voices on Pre-War Tension, as Joe Talbot growls of "a Macey's parade-sized pink elephant," Złakowska sees "war…in your eyes" and the man himself mumbles of "concrete towers… trouble and strife", with any binding narrative slipping mysteriously between its spacious guitar chords.

Under turns on a dime towards alarmingly approachable synth/slow beats backing and sublimely crystalline singing from Denmark's Oh Land, while Leytonstone crooner Murkage Dave and Croydon rapper Kway soon chicane into ultra-minimal dark takes on, respectively, contemporary R&B (Pay My Taxes) and grime (On A Move).

The long-mooted 'Scratch' team-up is a sketchy abstraction, and, at barely 27 minutes, *Lonely Guest* can feel slightly elusive. There is, however, limitless satisfaction in Move Me's triumphant grunge riff (ref. *Maxinquaye*'s Pumpkin), and Christmas Tree, where Maximo Park's Paul Smith flatly intones, "I miss you", and then, "I hope that I'm still alive next year." In that devastatingly poignant refrain, bridging personal tragedy and Covid universality, this pathological outsider once again chills the blood, effortlessly clinching artistic relevance.

Arushi Jain

★★★★

Under The Lilac Sky

LEAVING. DL/LP/MC

Brooklyn-based composer blends Hindustani classical with modular synth patterns.

Arushi Jain spent her first 18 years in India. For the past decade she's lived on America's East and West coasts. "I feel like I'm in both [countries] at the same time but in neither," she said in a recent interview. "[Thinking] where do I exist?" Blending centuries-old Hindustani evening ragas – intended to be performed between sunset and midnight – with West Coast new age synth modulations, Jain has created what she calls her "music of inbetweenness". Coloured by her hypnotic, indistinct vocals, pointillistic keyboard patterns and deep bass pulses, the feel is simultaneously unmoored and melancholy, impressionistic and contemplative, freedom as a kind of rootless uncertainty. It also has a strange effect on the listener's concept of time, 40-plus minutes of ethereal half-light patterns seemingly gone in a few blissful moments.

Andrew Male

Mac McCaughan

★★★★

The Sound Of Yourself

MERGE. CD/DL/LP

Merge label-owner and Superchunk leader's second solo album.

As the leader of Superchunk and their lo-fi cousins Portastatic, Ralph 'Mac' McCaughan has firm indie credentials. As Merge owner, he has furthered the careers of acts from Bob Mould to Lambchop. Now, it's time for him to really blossom on the solo front. Self-written and self-produced but featuring a clutch of guests, *The Sound Of Yourself* is the sound of a man stretching out. There are instrumentals, such as the Bowie-in-Berlin style (plus harp) dreamy opener Moss Light and 36 & Rain. There is the twangsome, harmony and percussion-laden I Hear A Radio and there is even the pulsating, all-out pop loveliness of Dawn Bends, which features the members of Yo La Tengo. The highlight, perhaps, is Sleep Donor, which finds Mac warbling "I hear a footstep in the hall/When there should be no one there at all," before things really take a spooked, distorted turn. What breadth of vision McCaughan has.

John Aizlewood

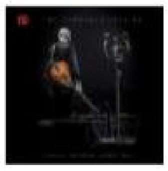
The The

★★★★

The Comeback Special

CINEOLA/EARMUSIC. CD/DL/LP

Top-drawer 24-song live album recorded at the Royal Albert Hall in 2018.



Lavishly documenting the return of Matt Johnson and The The at their first gig in 16 years (a film and art book also accompany this release), *The Comeback Special* is clearly a labour of love and – in keeping with Johnson's painstaking attention to production detail – a great-sounding concert record. The near two decades away from the stage haven't diminished the intimacy and power of Johnson's voice, along with his wry humour. Two songs in, he declares, "It's often been said that I write music for small bedrooms but spacious minds. So, you've got to imagine that we're all in one big bedroom." Highlights are numerous: the towering and moving Love Is Stronger Than Death; This Is The Day, with guitar-picking riff to the fore, adding a Beatley vibe. Bravo – but what we really want now, 21 years after 2000's *NakedSelf*, is a new The The studio album.

Tom Doyle

Alan Vega

★★★

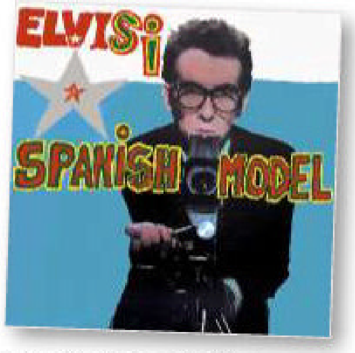
After Dark

IN THE RED. CD/DL/LP

Suicide warrior's final known vocal session, before his passing in 2016.

"How many times can you die?" growls Vega on the final track here, The Record Speed, a spooky speculation at the conclusion of his third posthumous album and the second this year, following April's mid-'90s electro-blitz *Mutator*. This one, cut live-to-tape in 2015, finds him fronting Pink Slip Daddy, a synth-skewed rock'n'roll rhythm section led by '50s-fixated guitarist Ben Vaughn, already known to Suicide-watchers for his part in 1996's *Cubist Blues* alongside Vega and Alex Chilton. Vaughn's same hollow-bodied reverb twang dominates here, over Palmyra Delran's fluctuating drums and Barb Dwyer's disquieting keyboard interference. While Nothing Left, like an NYC flipside to The Doors' LA Woman, stirringly generates nocturnal menace, Out Of Town borders on meandering late-shift jazz, and Lynchian ballad Wings Of Glory in parts lacks its ever-tangential anti-star on the mike. Might Vega have overdubbed upgrades after the fact? Probably not, but *After Dark* only intermittently hits the target.

Andrew Perry



Elvis Costello

★★★

Spanish Model

UME. CD/DL/LP

***This Year's Model*. In Spanish.**

Such is his keenness to press on, Elvis Costello doesn't always have the easiest of relationships with his back catalogue. Yet, he's rarely averse to making a seemingly bonkers idea work. And what could be more bonkers than this? For no obvious reason, he's taken the original musical tracks to 1978's *This Year's Model* (plus four other songs from the period) and recruited Spanish-speaking singers – from Uruguay's finest, Jorge Drexler, to former Menudo member Draco Rosa – to add new vocals. Stranger still, the whole thing works a treat. The new singers attack each song with the gusto The Attractions' backing warrants, so the Puerto Rican Luis Fonsi rugby tackles You Belong To Me; the Argentine Fito Paez sneers his way through Radio Radio, and Nina Diaz belts out No Action as if she's giving birth. A breath of the freshest air.

John Aizlewood

IRON MAIDEN
SENJUTSU

Iron Maiden

★★★

Senjutsu

PARLOPHONE. CD/DL/LP

A double-album casting mascot Eddie Ed as a samurai.

Clocking in at 82 minutes, *Senjutsu* translates as "tactics and strategy", but it might also conceivably be the title of a game show of endurance. Tactics, though, remain Iron Maiden's forte, this Jenga tower of riff permutations and derring-do a kind of catnip for headbangers unperturbed – nay thrilled – when songs are generously bookended by the sound of the sea (Darkest Hour). No matter that Death Of The Celts conjures a panto about Rob Roy, or or that after 11-plus minutes the title of Hell On Earth starts to seem prophetic; Maiden knows their vast constituency intimately, and as *Senjutsu* plays out – and on and on – frontman Bruce Dickinson never sounds less than game. Even if, like this writer, your love for Maiden remains rooted in their eponymous 1979 debut, *Senjutsu* reminds that it's not them that changed – it's us.

James McNair

Justin Adams And Mauro Durante

★★★★

Still Moving

PONDEROSA. CD/LP

The blues travel from the Mississippi River to the Mediterranean Sea.

Still Moving

Given the long proud history of blues guitar wranglers, how do you make the music of the Delta sound fresh and surprising? One answer, it turns out, is to take it on a trip to Puglia in southern Italy. Guitarist Justin Adams found common cause there with a fiddle and percussion-playing star of the local pizzica folk tradition. (Its wild rhythms were supposedly designed to save a dancer from the bite of a tarantula.) Ancient frame drum and the soaring fiddle of Mauro Durante – who leads the group Canzoniere Grecanico Salentino – mesh mesmerically with the raw, gutsy playing and occasional singing of Adams, Robert Plant's collaborator in the Sensational Space Shifters. But it's not all folkie freak-out – on Djinn Pulse or Cupa Cupa they decelerate to conjure hypnotic beauty.

John Bungey

TROPICAL FUCK STORM
DEEP STATES

Tropical Fuck Storm

★★★★

Deep States

JOYFUL NOISE. CD/DL/LP

Third LP by Gareth Liddiard's post-Drones project, and modern life is still rubbish.

There are few artists better suited to essay this wild, paranoid era than Gareth Liddiard. *Deep States* applies the bleak voice of his previous band Drones to a lurid landscape of internet conspiracy theories, rising fascism and global pandemics, swapping Drones' charred punk/Crazy Horse hybrid for modernist experimental pop. The tone is fevered, fatalistic, Liddiard's visions painted with the scattershot, satiric venom of Ralph Steadman, from Give A Fuck Fatigue's parade of "deep fakes, false flags, fires and famines", to Bumma Sanger's litany of Covid-era woes. Beyond such vivid, often thrilling caricatures, however, the acrid smoulder of The Donkey, the mysterious haunt of Legal Ghost and the nuanced pop of New Romeo Agent (sung by keyboardist Erica Dunn) prove that Tropical Fuck Storm have yet to succumb to glib nihilism, and that tenderness and poetry are still within their grasp.

Stevie Chick

Roger Taylor

★★★

Outsider

EMI. CD/DL/LP

Queen's singing drummer's lockdown blues.

Roger Taylor composed most of his sixth solo LP, *Outsider*, holed up in Cornwall, in lieu of a Queen + Adam Lambert tour. It shows, on a rather baffling cover of Shirley Ellis's 1965 hit The Clapping Song. "My mother told me if I was goody/That she would buy me a rubber dolly," Taylor declares in that familiar husk. His last work, 2013's *Fun On Earth*, was a protest album. Here, he weighs into global corruption on Gangsters Are Running This World, but fares better on Tides, Foreign Sand and a KT Tunstall-assisted We Are All Just Trying To Get By; great self-questioning songs mostly about being a seventysomething Roger Taylor. On I Know I Know I Know, Taylor apologises to, presumably, his ex-wives/partners for past indiscretions, before addressing his mortality on the spectral-sounding Journey's End. The emotional honesty and lack of bravado suits him.

Mark Blake

Snail Mail

★★★★

Valentine

MATADOR. CD/DL/LP

Heart-shaped pop: heir of '90s indie tears into modern romance.

It's complicated, of course. Lindsey Jordan's second album as Snail Mail is full of love songs and death drives, sleeping on couches and wakeful nights, second guessing and third parties. There's a reference to life "post-rehab" on the churning Ben Franklin; communication is not the only thing that breaks down ("We're not really talking now," sings Jordan with heart-breaking simplicity on Madonna). Yet despite the turmoil these songs describe, a flash of Elliott Smith-style emotional acuity every few seconds, musically *Valentine* tells a different story. Building on the confidence of 2018 debut *Lush*, released when she was 17, Jordan shades the title track or Forever (Sailing) with synthesizer rushes and fades, while the blue country strum of C Et Al or Mia's stringed swoon brighten the contrast with the title track's abject daughter-of-Courtney fury. It's complicated, yes, but what's not to love?

Victoria Segal

Brandi Carlile

★★★★

In These Silent Days

ATLANTIC. CD/DL/LP

Seventh long-player from the Grammy-festooned activist.

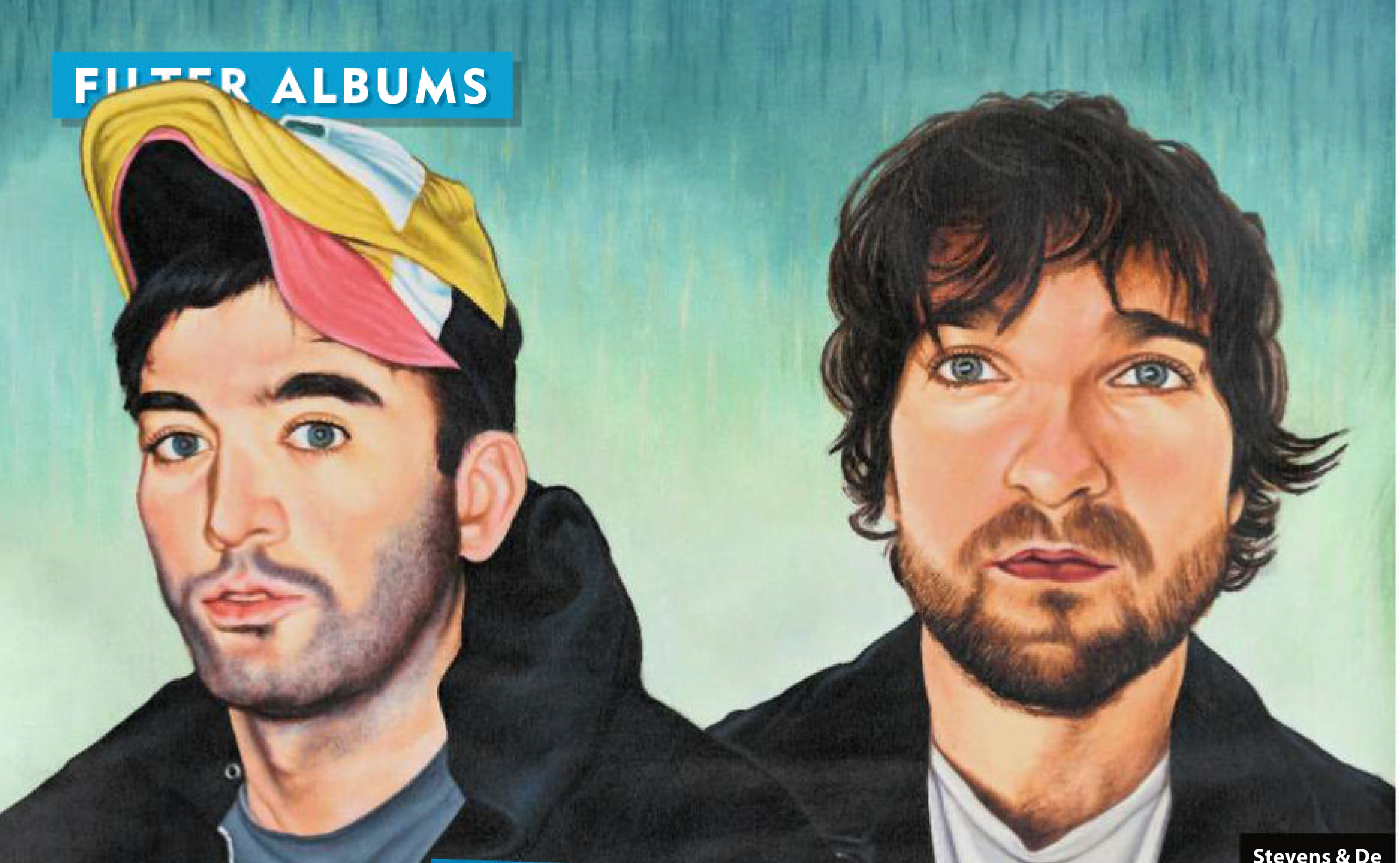
IN THE US, Brandi Carlile is a guaranteed Top 10 act who headlines Madison Square Garden. Here in the UK, she is far less well-known. Inevitably, perhaps, it's the UK's loss. As Mama Werewolf reminds us, Carlile was once a reasonably straightforward alt-country artist, but she's matured and mutated into something altogether more mercurial, where she straddles a host of genres, while bold harmonies underpin all she does. The opening Right On Time is a ballad that could soundtrack almost any big-budget blockbuster, Stay Gentle is as sparse as earworms come, while the rootsy but literate Broken Horses wouldn't have been out of place on a late-'80s Melissa Etheridge album. Everything comes together on Sinners, Saints & Fools which begins with dramatic strings, flirts with being a windswept anthem and climaxes in a freeform freakout. Certainly, there's nothing here to stop her rise.

John Aizlewood

Brandi Carlile: mercurial genre-straddler.

Neil Krug

Brandi Carlile
In these silent days



Stevens & De Augustine: always open.

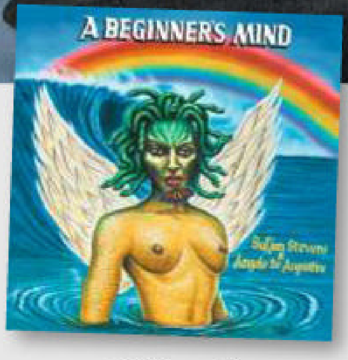
Sufjan Stevens & Angelo De Augustine

★★★★

A Beginner's Mind

ASTHMATIC KITTY. CD/DL/LP

Stevens and labelmate hatch a meditative LP during a month-long sabbatical.



With a titular nod to shoshin, the Zen Buddhist practice of openness and eagerness, *A Beginner's Mind* wears its conceptual depth lightly, with use of the I Ching, Eno's Oblique Strategy cards and the duo's nightly downtime movie-watching all feeding in. The gently ticking, lightly compressed acoustic instrument arpeggios will be familiar to fans of both songwriters, but it's the pair's half-whispered vocal blend that enchants, De Augustine's falsetto tiptoeing above that of Stevens. Despite the odd surprise – the Ernie Isley-like guitar lead on Back To Oz; You Give Death A Bad Name's poker-faced nod to Bon Jovi – the dream-state exemplified by the melting piano title track and gossamer standout Lady Macbeth In Chains is rarely disrupted, with Stevens and De Augustine like Art Garfunkel twinned.

James McNair

The Bevis Frond

★★★★

Little Eden

FIRE. CD/DL/LP

On his 27th outing, psych-rock outsider digs deep to find meaning.

With two band members ailing, compulsive songwriter Nick Saloman, 68, cut the 20 tunes here alone at home, and, unlike early DIY efforts such as 1987's sprawling *Miasma*, they sound focused, oddly concise for a double album, and motivated. After 35 years' service, the Bevis Frond template of Dinosaur Jr.-style buzzsaw pop and Hendrix-esque guitar exploration aren't changing, but *Little Eden* still seeks unusual melodic phrasing, lyrics (see "Cyclohexane"; "subcutaneous vitality"!) and songcraft. The swooning Faces-like ballad Hold Your Horses and the brash, Who-ish Cherry Garden are standouts, but the whole deluge of material and its themes of loyalty and believing converge on 10-minute closer Dreams Of Flying, whose tempest of Neil Young-y soloing and final line, "Don't you ever give up trying", should rightly have fans and newcomers alike punching the air in solidarity.

Andrew Perry

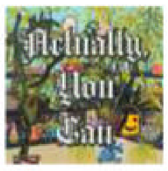
Deerhoof

★★★

Actually, You Can

JOYFUL NOISE. CD/DL/LP/MC

The 23-album streak of musical and existential inquiry continues.



With 84 lyrical lines across nine songs, *Actually, You Can* manages the efficient impressionism of haiku, with none of its calm. Deerhoof being Deerhoof, the arty, poppy, proggy noise is jagged, cathartic, and occasionally grand. The ominous opening of Be Unbarred, O Ye Gates Of Hell gives way to the majesty of a Saturday morning cartoon theme. On We Grew, And We Were Astonished, massive beats punch your gut even as your mind is swirling amid stardust. Myriad lines and titles here (buried sometimes in tips for storing tomatoes, or going straight to video) cut right to questions of human existence: "O jailer, who's in charge around here?" (Department Of Corrections). Deerhoof evidently want to know why humans do the things we do: Our Philosophy Is Fiction, states one song title. Is received wisdom wise at all? Can you ask that? Actually, you can.

Chris Nelson

Karen Peris

★★★★

A Song Is Way Above The Lawn

BELLA UNION. CD/DL/LP

The Innocence Mission's backbone celebrates the day-to-day.

During For A Giraffe, Karen Peris sings of "talking about small things". It's a declaration key to the second solo LP by the Innocence Mission mainstay. To The Library describes seeing her friends there. This Is A Song In Wintertime revels in the shared experience of queuing outside a cinema as snowfall begins. In her familiar, seemingly Swedish-accented voice, Pennsylvania's Peris explores these experiences over a rolling piano (two tracks use acoustic guitar). Accordion, melodica and gentle strings bring colour. What could be a twee exploration of wonder is instead an intense reverie. While stylistically echoing The Brothers Williams Said, opening track on the Innocence Mission's last album, *A Song Is Way Above The Lawn* is more spare and – given the presence of her husband and fellow Mission member Don and their children – more personal.

Kieron Tyler

Scott Hirsch

★★★★

Windless Day

ECHO MAGIC. CD/DL/LP

The Tulsa Sound reinvented, in Ojai, California.

No point in beating about the bush with this one: if you like JJ Cale, chances are you'll enjoy Scott Hirsch, too. Big Passenger on the Californian's third solo album is the perfect place to start, as a sputtering drum box heralds the most porch-friendly of chooglеs. Call Me The Breeze is the best analogue, though there's also a neat detour into something akin to Benny Spellman's Fortune Teller to mix things up. Hirsch has been on this path since dialling back his work as bassist/producer in Hiss Golden Messenger, and *Windless Day* is his most satisfying album yet, deferential to his heroes – Ry Cooder is clearly another favourite, notably on Drummer Of Shiloh – while having enough understated personality to make his songs more substantive than pastiche. Listen out too for the backing vocals on Much Too Late's drowsy Tulsa funk: that's Carolyn Dennis, as heard on *Street Legal*, a former Mrs Bob Dylan.

John Mulvey

Public Service Broadcasting

★★★

Bright Magic

PLAY IT AGAIN SAM. CD/DL/LP

Enigmatic sonic flaneurs hit the Hauptstadt.

The Phileas Foggs of sound collage, steering a course between the British Film Institute archives, the Cold War space race and the Welsh valleys on previous records, Public Service Broadcasting have stuck a map pin into Berlin for their fourth album. *Bright Magic* takes a different tack to previous recordings, however, swerving foundational samples for J Willgoose, Esq's research-based reimagining of the German capital and its resonant mythology. That this approach results in a lowering spoken-word cameo from Blixa Bargeld on the Metropolis-inspired industrial crunch of Der Rhythmus Der Maschinen would be trade-off enough: other inspirations include Marlene Dietrich (My Blue Heaven), David Bowie (The Visitor's Warszawa drama), decadent nightlife and Depeche Mode (People, Let's Dance), and Europe's first electric streetlight (Im Licht). The excellent concept sometimes outshines the music, but if everyone's a tourist, this is the trip to go on.

Victoria Segal

Efterklang

★★★★

Windflowers

CITY SLANG. CD/DL/LP

Melancholic Danes' pared-back sixth plays to ruminative strengths.

Previous Efterklang projects have included conceptual works inspired by remote mining settlements, collaborations with baroque ensembles, and even an interactive opera. Their sixth full-length is a more modest affair, but also one of their finest. There's a focus to *Windflowers* that foregrounds their lightness of touch and canny blend of electronic and acoustic instrumentation, and singer Caspar Clausen's subtle sense of drama. Distance, isolation and loneliness are recurrent themes, Clausen the beating, broken heart within the pocket chamber symphonies composed by bandmates Mads Brauer and Rasmus Stolberg, articulating his sorrows. The extra-terrestrial longing of Alien Arms and the sparsely beautiful Hold Me Close When You Can are highlights, while the closing, majestic Åbent Sår – a collaboration with Swedish techno producer The Field – builds to a pulsing, ecstatic climax that kisses the sublime.

Stevie Chick

Daniel Anum Jasper

David Ornette Cherry

★★★

Organic Nation Listening Club (The Continual)

SPIRITMUSE. CD/DL/LP

American musician serves up a cosmic meditation.

Like his father, Don Cherry – the famously nomadic avant-garde trumpeter who was also a pioneer of world music – this 63-year-old multi-instrumentalist creates music that defies categorisation. His first album since *It Could Be Different* in 2013, *Organic Nation Listening Club* is an unclassifiable melange of natural sounds and advanced technology brought to life by both live and electronic instrumentation. The 10-track set's marriage of past and present is epitomised by the track So & So & So And So, where digital bleeps collide with looped tablas, woozy sitar drones and a manic warbling flute. Elsewhere, you'll find eerie free jazz (Cosmic Nomad), an organ-led tango (Eagle Play) and African folk melodies punctuated by mellifluous birdsong (Najour). Though underpinned by a deep spiritual vibe, Cherry's immersive soundscapes have an intoxicating, life-affirming joy.

Charles Waring

The Oscillation

★★★★

Untold Futures

ALL TIME LOW. CD/LP

East London acid-rock space man Demian Castellanos hits maximum freak-out.

Since debuting on big-beat architect J Saul Kane's DC Recordings imprint with 2007's *Out Of Phase*, Castellanos has explored most avenues of psychedelic misadventure. As The Oscillation, initial experiments around looped-up thump have gradually morphed into pulsating jams where guitar amps go up to 14, while bass doom, synth throbs and percussive thunder further batter the senses. This eighth album forsakes any of the formal restraint found in vintage Loop/Spacemen 3, say, for full-tilt groove-based freak-outs of Comets On Fire-style fury. Some light and shade prevails: Forever Knowing establishes a relatively spacious framework of flanged six-string and portentous low-end, only to left turn at 3:40 into a more punishing dimension via a filthy bass line and myriad FX. Expertly constructed and limitlessly detailed, *Untold Futures* will reliably escort 'experienced' listeners to the other side, and beyond.

Andrew Perry

Reb Fountain

★★★★

IRIS

FLYING NUN. CD/DL/LP

After Aldous Harding and Nadia Reid, here is NZ's next alt-folk sensation.

Self-harm, rehab, raising two kids alone: Reb Fountain has had much to process. In Greek mythology, Iris is a messenger to the Gods, and the album bearing her name is Fountain's means by which to share hard truths while sounding anything but downbeat. Emerging from the same South Island alt-folk scene as Aldous Harding, Fountain can match her compadre for shivery, sparse moods (Foxbright) but *IRIS*'s span is much broader. Invisible Man's chorus could be NZ's reigning pop star Lorde; the title track infuses AOR soul with sultry R&B; Fisherman's Gaelic overtones combine silken with stormy. Fountain's restless energy extends to her targets: Beastie despairs at humanity's toxic tendencies, while Heart is an anthem for unrequited lovers and the title track is for every tortured soul: "What do you do with the mad that you feel?/We dare to be ourselves."

Martin Aston

Reb Fountain: restless energy.

Marissa Findlay

Rhyton

★★★★

Pharaonic Crosstalk

FEEDING TUBE. DL/LP

Underground psych vets' intoxicating new blend.

Music fans who've long craved a combo of *On The Corner* era-Miles, the Allman Brothers and Greek-flavoured psych are, perhaps, a select group. Nevertheless, the latest album by NYC's Rhyton makes a case for this unlikely area being a rich new zone for rock exploration. Named after an Ancient Greek vessel for hallucinogenic drinks, the trio have been active since 2011, following linchpin Dave Shuford's work with the No-Neck Blues Band and D Charles Speer & The Helix. If their catalogue thus far has been a rewarding one (2014's *Kykeon* is their optimum Aegean trip), *Pharaonic Crosstalk* is where the jams get even weirder, funkier and, after a fashion, more accessible. So opener Stanley Stood Still spikes its boogie with some Wonder-ish clavinet, LIT On The DL is, roughly, The Magic Band playing Low Rider, and there's a tune called, perfectly, Croz. If only you could remember their name…

John Mulvey

Rodrigo Leão

★★★★

A Estranha Beleza Da Vida

BMG/MODERN. CD/DL/LP

Sepia-tinged mood-casting from seasoned Portuguese composer.

A celebrated, Yann Tiersen-like figure in Portugal, Rodrigo Leão is more widely known as co-founder of fado folk ensemble Madredeus, featured protagonists in Wim Wenders' 1994 movie, Lisbon Story. An accomplished, Morricone-indebted soundtrack creator and multi-instrumentalist, Leão's previous albums have featured guest vocals from such as Beth Gibbons and Neil Hannon. Here, Lambchop's Kurt Wagner lends whispered drollery to the smooching Who Can Resist, equal parts French chanson and Noel Coward recitative (Bryan Ferry should cover it), while the Roy Orbison-like Friend Of A Friend's pizzicato strings and nonchalant pianos frame Canadian singer-songwriter Michelle Gurevich's smoky intimacies ("Forbidden fruit, always in season"). Elsewhere, *A Estranha Beleza Da Vida* ('the strange beauty of life') proffers a seductive miscellany of aching, Cinema Paradiso-like études for string quartet, tango accordion, even ambient keyboards, all of it glowing with a warm, candlelit poignancy.

David Sheppard

JAZZ

BY ANDY COWAN

BADBADNOTGOOD

★★★★

Talk Memory

XL. CD/DL/LP

Rap-friendly Canadian genre-mashers return to jazz for fifth LP.

HAVING MADE their name as a hip-hop jam band – summoning electric backings for MF DOOM, Ghostface Killah, Snoop Dogg – these atypical graduates from Toronto's Humber College jazz program hit pause after 2016's R&B-flecked *IV*. The result is their most forward-facing jazz album yet, packed with complex, multi-storied compositions you can still dance to. Signal From The Noise sets the standard, morphing from Necks-like brooding atmospherics into a frenetic show of strength, Alexander Sowinski's gymnastic fills and Chester Hansen's rising-falling bass pulse offset by Leland Whitty's distorted guitar solo. Cameos from Laraaji, Terrace Martin, Brandee Younger and Karriem Riggins allow BBNG to funnel down instrumental foxholes, but Brazilian composer Arthur Verocai's sympatico string arrangements make the most telling intervention, elevating City Of Mirrors and Talk Meaning into a deeply spiritual dimension.

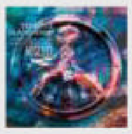
ALSO RELEASED

Terence Blanchard

★★★★

Absence

BLUE NOTE. CD/DL



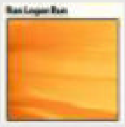
Mixing Wayne Shorter standards with originals that pay homage to the soprano sax legend, *Absence* finds New Orleans trumpeter Blanchard and regular band E Collective effortlessly shifting textures, with disguised flares of long notes and high blasts casting fresh melodic light on much-covered works Fall and Diana. Elsewhere, Blanchard's sophisticated orchestral skills are voiced by the Turtle Island Quartet, peaking on the quivering Second Wave.

Run Logan Run

★★★★

For A Brief Moment We Could Smell The Flowers

WORM DISCS. DL/LP



Tenor saxophonist Andrew Neil Hayes' first outing with new drummer Matt Brown cleaves to RLR's core principles – layering up a pedal-treated hail of notes over polyrhythmic flurries desperately seeking transcendence. Spacious synth soundscapes add cinematic richness on Screaming With The Light On and the tail-turning Cold Showers.

The Cookers

★★★★

Look Out!

GEARBOX. CD/DL/LP

Sixth LP from these forward-leaning post-bop veterans finds them changing gears at will. Packed with swinging rhythms, trenchant melodies and soulful solos, hard-edged originals like the piano-pulsing Mystery Of Monifa Brown, cross-cutting brass volleys of Somalia and ensemble push-and-pull of Traveling Lady scream with uncurbed passion while eschewing grandstanding.

Marcin Wasilewski Trio

★★★★

En Attendant

ECM. CD/DL/LP

Improv, minimalism and curiosity blend as bassist Slawomir Kurkiewicz and drummer Michal Miskiewicz sustain a tranquil, low-key yet focused edge, the quiet intensity of shadowy trio-written three-parter In Motion offset by typically transportive covers of Carla Bley and The Doors that show off the Polish pianist's dreamy interpretive powers, and label boss/producer Manfred Eicher's enduring devotion to atmospherics. *AC*

"Beautifully orchestrated caving in": Haley Fohr's Circuit Des Yeux is ready to flow.

Darkness visible

Chicago musician's powerful exploration of personal and global collapse. By **Victoria Segal**.

Circuit Des Yeux

★★★★

-io

MATADOR. CD/DL/LP

"IS THIS the end?" asks Haley Fohr on *-io*, "is this how it feels?" Listening to the songs on her sixth album as Circuit Des Yeux, it seems entirely possible. From the grief-blasted valedictions of Vanishing, martial groove undercut by the poignancy of its lyrics ("Goodbye dog/Goodbye thought… goodbye to a mother's call at dinner time"), to Sculpting The Exodus, Nico's Evening Of Light crossed with a mass extinction event ("is the signal fading?"), all these songs have a dying fall. No wonder, then, the artwork shows the musician caught mid-air after leaping from a Chicago studio, a plunge she made after training – somewhat incongruously – with The Mandalorian's stunt expert.

Such real-world proof of Fohr's commitment becomes redundant in the implacable face of *-io*. Named after an imagined city in a permanent state of collapse and written after a period of mourning for a friend, it might explore mankind's giant leap into oblivion, but – aside from occasional vocal untethering – its control is steely. The undimmed impact of Fohr's voice – a tarry, cold-pressed blend of Nico and Anohni – is an unsurprisingly vital component of its uncanny, negative-space chill, but it's underpinned by the sheer intergalactic drama of her arrangements.

Rough with bedroom-recording static when she started out in her late teens – her first record, *Symphone*, was released in 2008 – Fohr's music has become increasingly monumental. Falling Blonde and Geyser, for example, from 2017's *Reaching For Indigo*, both felt gravity's pull – but here, Fohr has turned the drag of the universe into end-times *son et lumière*. Timpani, cornet, tuba and flute are among the instruments adding to the synthesized doom, a beautifully orchestrated caving-in.

CIRCUIT DES YEUX
-io

Yet this isn't just Armageddon theatre – there's also human-scale pain here. The Chase, resonating with Kim Gordon's whispered nightmares, hints at a fragile physical self: "Help her run/As far as she can/2 legs under 1 sun." On the frosted drones of Walking Toward Winter, human connection freezes and shatters. "You know there's an avalanche that lives inside of me," sings Fohr, "and it's ready to flow." Meanwhile, on the closing Oracle Song a sweet Earth Angel-style melody suddenly lifts from the ruins, a disturbing meditation on innocence and loss: "You're surrounded by the same men who buried me when I was 17." The apocalypse, like that avalanche, is closer than you think.

-io doesn't try to ingratiate or console. Instead, Fohr ambitiously attempts to strip back protective coatings and cocoons, to show what happens when distractions peel away and the inevitable pushes through. The signal might be fading, but through the rubble and dust, *-io*'s transmissions come through loud and clear.

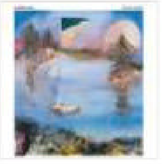
Audiobooks

★★★

Astro Tough

HEAVENLY. CD/DL/LP

Odd couple refine discreet blend of post-modern fairy tales and freaky electropop.



Welsh producer David Wrench and London art student Evangeline Ling continue to embrace pop's spikier edges on the sequel to 2018's anything-goes debut *Now! (In A Minute)*. Wrench's easy command of tangled electro and skewed beats is on a much tighter rein second time around, the minimal throbs of The Doll imperceptibly shifting from sinister spoken word tale into full-on club banger. By turns dramatic, vulnerable, coquettish and flirtatious, Ling's quick wit and droll put-downs rarely miss their mark, her scything sarcasm on The English Manipulator (with its Manet/Monet conundrum) reaching peak opprobrium above the jazzy keys and errant guitar licks of Blue Tits. Whether exposing internal monologues (He Called Me Bambi) or embracing surrealist pop (First Move), Audiobooks' adoption of absurdity continues to confound in the most delightful ways.

Andy Cowan

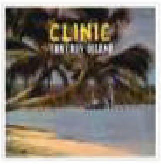
Clinic

★★★★

Fantasy Island

DOMINO. CD/DL/LP

PPE-draped garage-punk Merseysiders go coldwave.



Now into their third decade as ER-ready neo-psychedelicists, something had to give with Clinic. After so long remapping a late-'60s lysergic middle ground between UK whimsy (Syd-era Floyd, Tintern Abbey) and Stateside aggro (Count Five, 13th Floor Elevators) in their own macabre style, surely one day they'd have to venture elsewhere? That moment has finally arrived on their ninth long-player – kind of. Now just a duo (hyperventilating mainman Ade Blackburn is still there), talk is of '80s signifiers like Kid Creole & The Coconuts, and the acquisition of "an electronic acid bass machine." More realistically, we're talking synths and drum machines: Fine Dining remodels quintessential Clinic as Kraftwerkian pop, its characteristically sinister mood offset against syn-drum whoops, while Refractions (In The Rain) goes after early Human League with a disco-handclap beat. Baffling excursions into exotica (On The Other Side) also make *Fantasy Island* different enough to reignite their 'wow' factor.

Andrew Perry

Limiñanas/Garnier

★★★

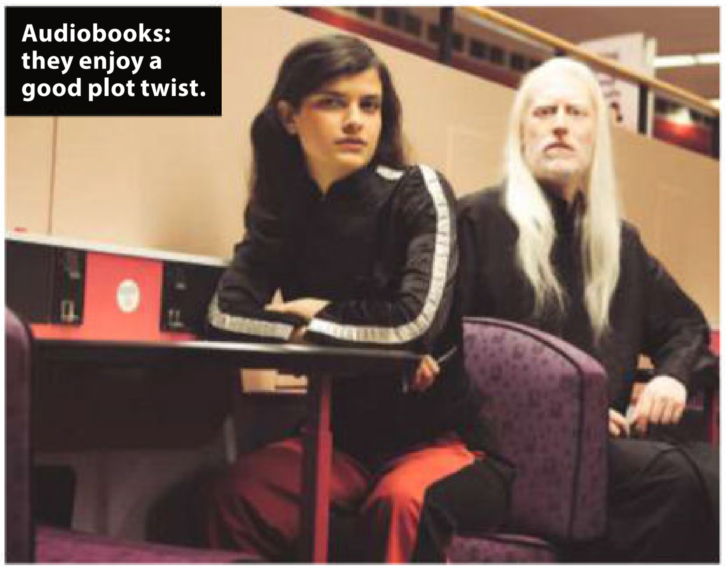
De Pelicula

BECAUSE. CD/DL/LP

A Gallic alliance between '60s garage-pop duo and house DJ.

Near neighbours in the South of France, Perpignan's Spector-meets-JAMC-reverent couple Lionel and Marie Limiñana hit it off with Parisian '90s dance overlord Laurent Garnier, now resident in Provence, after he overheard Lionel's Louie Louie ringtone at his own Yeah festival in 2017. Four years on, this team-up has the feel of a genuine collision of cultures, with hi-tech rhythm tracks and synth textures transforming The Limiñanas' retro-reverb sound from its core, as opposed to a cursory modernisation around its fringes. Sonically and spiritually, *De Pelicula* closely resembles Death In Vegas's *The Contino Sessions*, as disparate spoken-word vocalists tell the tale of low-rent couple Juliette and Saul, unfolding like an audio-only road movie drenched in noir and (if O-level French still serves) considerable sleaze. Despite the language barrier for some listeners, there's sufficient allure about the cumulatively thunderous instrumental Je Rentrais Par Le Bois and the stylish conceit to warrant investigation.

Andrew Perry



Audiobooks: they enjoy a good plot twist.

Rachel Lipsitz

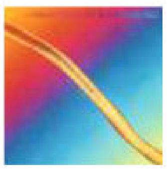
Hayden Thorpe

★★★

Moondust For My Diamond

DOMINO. CD/DL/LP

Former Wild Beast takes a cosmic trip on second solo long-player.



With 2019's piano-driven solo debut *Diviner*, Hayden Thorpe stripped out some of the floridity that defined his defunct band Wild Beasts. *Moondust For My Diamond*, recorded after the singer's return to his Lake District home, allows that impulse towards grandeur back in slightly altered form, its rich synthscapes and expansive lyrics suggesting many nights spent lying under the stars, plotting co-ordinates in time and space. "Within this skin/I am boundless," sings Thorpe over the luscious, languid beats of No Such Thing, while Golden Ratio and Supersensual, for all their sonic pleasures, have the overripe air of a rather hands-on self-actualisation workshop. Yet with the pixelated Avalon of The Universe Is Always Right, Rational Heartache's seductive techno twitch or Metafeeling's repurposed Scritti Politti gloss, *Moondust For My Diamond* stays the right kind of precious.

Victoria Segal

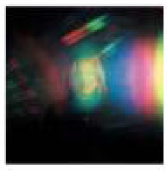
Ty Segall

★★★

Harmonizer

DRAG CITY. CD/DL/LP

Cali garage rock supremo adds synths and goes with the flow.



At various points in the past decade, Ty Segall's extreme productivity has threatened to overshadow his musical excellence, so that even his best work – such as 2018's *Freedom's Goblin* – could be obscured by the two other albums he made that year. This 13th solo set, however, is his first in two years, a previously unimaginable hiatus. 2019's *First Taste* reconfigured Segall's molten garage rock in a novel way – no guitars were involved – and while *Harmonizer* isn't quite so conceptual, the axe fuzz here is augmented by some powerfully overdriven synths (Cooper Crain, of kosmische heads Bitchin Bajas, co-produces). Aligned to blocky, modal tunes and robot-stomp rhythms, the overall sound is surprisingly close to Queens Of The Stone Age: check the Homme-like falsetto harmonies on Whisper, too. A big-sounding record, it feels like a step forward for Segall (Pictures is *massive*), even as Ride reconfigures his age-old debt to Syd Barrett.

John Mulvey

ELECTRONICA

BY STEPHEN WORTHY

Herbert

★★★★

Musca

ACCIDENTAL. DL/LP

Experimental doyen circles back to his roots in house music.

SOUND EXPLORER Matthew Herbert, may be grand vizier of the electronic avant-garde, but his polymath approach shouldn't be overlooked. *Musca* is the long-awaited third episode of his 'domestic house' series and addresses the interregnum between 2019's *Brexit Big Band* album and his next experimental project, said to feature over one billion sounds. But *Musca* is far more than filler. Opening with the crunching sweep of Two Doors, Herbert sets sail on a (wonky-ish) 4/4 course. Hypnotised is moody, throbbing house with a UK garage skip. Part hymn, part tribal house, Herbert lets the space between rule on The Impossible. Let Me Sleep is cut from similar cloth, albeit of a smoky, after-hours jazz variety. While politics percolates through all Herbert does – there's palpable despair at the human race – the lyrical refrain of broken beat/deep house hybrid Tell Me A Secret offers solace. "I can feel the sun on me," it opines. Here's hoping.

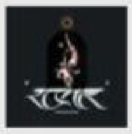
ALSO RELEASED

Lone

★★★★

Always Inside Your Head

GRECO-ROMAN. CD/DL/LP



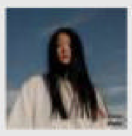
Matt Cutler's eighth album as Lone finds him majoring in dreamy downtempo with a strong Balearic lilt and fed by woozy shoegaze influences. Dappled with Mediterranean sun, Inlove 2, for example, finds Lone relocating My Bloody Valentine to Café del Mar, reaching a crescendo that features suitably Shieldsian skirls of noise. Music best experienced as the sun drops below the horizon.

박혜진 Park Hye Jin

★★★★

Before I Die

NINJA TUNE. CD/DL/LP



Every note and every word on *Before I Die* is written, played and produced by the prodigiously talented South Korean, 박혜진 Park Hye Jin. She spits fruity raps (in both Korean and English) as she sashays between raw house and spiky lo-fi hip-hop, blissed-out beats and Underworld-ian techno. A lugubrious but fresh, genre-bending take on modern club music.

GLOK

★★★★

Pattern Recognition

BYTES. CD/DL/LP

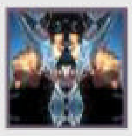
Hidden within the pulsating kosmische rhythms, sharp-elbowed acid trax and shimmering Andrew Weatherall-style Balearica, are powerful reminders that the protagonist behind GLOK is none other than Ride's Andy Bell. The ambient, psychedelia and drone that have been the bedrock of much of Bell's music soak every lysergic minute. A highly sensuous and consistently rewarding piece of work.

Hannah Holland

★★★

Tectonic

PRAH. DL/LP



Her recent successes have been in soundtracks – notably last year's Channel 4 drama Adult Material – but Hannah Holland's heart still belongs to the dancefloor. *Tectonic* stomps from snarling electro jams (Sth Ldn) to percussion-loaded jungle (Afters) through house with a distinctly gritty vibe (Shutters). The doleful ARPs and strings on Raindrops are a reminder that Holland revels in subtlety. *SW*

Astrid Swan

★★★

D/other

SOLITI. CD/DL/LP

Deeply touching fifth LP from award-winning performer.

Finnish singer-songwriter Astrid Swan draws on American influences, mixing lush, intelligent pop with the clear-eyed sensibilities of the far North. She has much to write about; at 39, her stage IV breast cancer has metastasized to her brain. An idiosyncratic vocalist with echoes of Rickie Lee Jones and Laurie Anderson, she's produced a lulling, funky, passionate farewell to her young daughter; thoughts on life, love and loss that work for us all. In Drift, whispered lyrics are edged by delicate piano and sweeps of strings, while gorgeous Silvi's Dream ramps it up, Swan roaring like Kate Bush. Not Your Mom is hooky country-rock: at night, "I pick up all the fallen stars/So you can stick them on your ceiling…" There are songs about relationships, angels, bitterness. "Love me more," she implores on Daughter. And it's either her daughter's request, or Swan's.

Glyn Brown

Danny George Wilson

★★★★

Another Place

LOOSE. CD/DL/LP

Wilson shakes loose his Champs for experimental solo long-player.

The title is apt, Danny George Wilson's second solo LP relocating from the triumphal Americana of his work as Grand Drive and Danny & The Champs and presenting his native tunefulness in starker contexts. Recorded with youthful producer Hamish Benjamin, *Another Place* is a pointedly intimate work – lo-fi, introspective, unvarnished. Such an aesthetic serves the songs, which are darker and more unresolved than Wilson's usual sweet-hearted fables, from the Sebadoh-esque Giving Away Too Much's confession that "winning feels like losing" to the bare-boned chill of I Wanna Tell You, its minimal piano, drum machine and strum suiting its narrative of lost dreams and shadows. Covers of Spirit's We've Got A Lot To Learn (featuring Jeff Tweedy and Gerry Love) and Sinatra's troubled I Would Be In Love (Anyway), a duet with Emma Swift, round out an idiosyncratic gem that's also one of Wilson's finest.

Stevie Chick

David Lance Callahan

★★★★

English Primitive I

TINY GLOBAL. CD/DL/LP

Former indie gatekeeper's folk-fusion odyssey.

For his first – terrific – solo album, David Lance Callahan has gone against type. Having fronted sinewy C86-era scrappers The Wolfhounds and the electronic agitators Moonshake, the singer locates a common ground between trad British folk and Saharan blues, with an occasional injection of Eastern strings. Seven frequently lengthy drone-based ballads demand more of Callahan's vibrant, stark voice than before, and not known for guitar-playing until now, his snaking, thrumming patterns suit the earthy mood. Lyrically, *English Primitive I* is an uncanny mixture too. Between two class-war tracts – the sarky Born Of The Welfare State Was I and a sombre Always – feverish visions of outliers abound, such as the Goatman ("spriggan eight-foot tall") and the feral outcast Foxboy, but also One Rainy September's heartbreaking parent/child breakdown and a slyly romantic She's The King Of My Life.

Martin Aston

Various

★★★★

I'll Be Your Mirror: A Tribute To The Velvet Underground & Nico

VERVE. CD/DL/LP

Final LP executive-produced by Hal Willner, following his Covid-related death in 2020.

Having overseen multi-artist tribute albums whose focuses ranged from Thelonious Monk to Marc Bolan to Disney film songs, it's perhaps fitting that Hal Willner's last project doffs its cap to arguably the most influential album ever made. Sticking to the 1967 LP's running order, a procession of contributors queue up to take their turn in the spotlight and pay their respects. Many play it pretty straight – Kurt Vile's garagey Run Run Run, Michael Stipe's lovingly-delivered Sunday Morning – while others (see Fontaines D.C. upping the tempo and intensity of The Black Angel's Death Song) make the songs sound as if they're entirely their own. Best of all, perhaps, is the complete transformation of All Tomorrow's Parties by St. Vincent and Thomas Bartlett into a neo-classical, vocoder-enhanced spoken word piece.

Tom Doyle

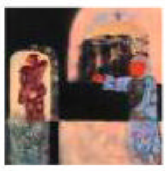
Hand Habits

★★★★

Fun House

SADDLE CREEK. CD/DL/LP

Quietly devastating third LP puts in-demand collaborator back in spotlight.



"Is that all you've got?" sings Meg Duffy on Graves, an almost Joan Baez-pure examination of memory and grief. "Just a hole in a song/And you fill it with what went wrong." Yet while trauma is deep in *Fun House*'s foundations, it's no conventional repository of confessional songwriting. As a guitarist, Duffy (who uses they/them pronouns) has played with Kevin Morby, War On Drugs and Perfume Genius (a guest on No Difference and Just To Hear You). Even centre stage, Duffy works with unshowy precision and stylistic suppleness, from the remarkable Aquamarine, dancefloor strobing flashing their life before your eyes, to The Answer and Control, displaying an Elliott Smith-like grasp of classic pop poignancy. The previous Hand Habits record was wryly titled *Placeholder*; navigating the trick mirrors and buckling floors of memory and identity, *Fun House* moves Duffy ever closer to the revelatory heart of the matter.

Victoria Segal

Maston With L'Eclair

★★★

Souvenir

INNOVATIVE LEISURE. CD/LP/DL

Silken union of Swiss sophisticates and Allah-Las associate.

Los Angeles native and Ennio Morricone fan Frank Maston's path has been restless. In Paint, he played with Allah-Las' Pedrum Siadatian. He's also spent time in Dutch psych-naut Jacco Gardner's band, issued a few solo albums – the third on UK library imprint KPM – and lived in Paris. While there, he encountered Geneva band L'Eclair. Together, in the Netherlands, they've made *Souvenir*. On their own, L'Eclair's two long-players showcase jazzy, spacey instrumentals underpinned by grooves: the soundtrack to hazy, lazy days. With Maston and recording live in the studio, the resultant confection is close to the UK's Soundcarriers and the reflective side of early Air – a warm aural bath in gentle funk with aerated melodies and a yacht rock lilt. When Maston sings, he has the foaminess of the Alessi Brothers. Sonically, *Souvenir* synthetically replicates a shag-pile equipped '70s interior.

Kieron Tyler

Shannon Lay

★★★★

Geist

SUB POP. CD/DL/LP

That's the spirit: LA singer-songwriter opens her mind on fourth album.

Shannon Lay: sense of wonder.

Kai MacKnight

IT MAKES sense that Shannon Lay should cover Syd Barrett's Late Night on her new record; his feeling of being "alone and unreal" is very much *Geist*'s keynote mood. On the follow-up to 2019's hazy *August*, Lay undertakes a gentle folk quest through inner space to find solid ground. "Have I always been who I am?" she asks on the Bridget St John reflections of Rare To Wake, keyboards and handclaps stirring up silt under her voice and guitar. That sense of wonder telescopes out into A Thread To Find, Lay imagining hidden forces under concrete reality, or the title track's warm-hearted communion. Contributors include Julia Holter and Sharon Van Etten associate Devin Hoff, and Ty Segall, whose guitar solo on Shores is a contrasting jolt of worldly energy. Delicate yet resolute, *Geist* is a beautiful spin through the windmills of Lay's mind, unreal in the best ways.

SHANNON LAY GEIST

Victoria Segal

MONO
The fabulous
COURETTES
FLAVIA & MARTIN COURI
BACK IN MONO

The Courettes

★★★★

Back To Mono

DAMAGED GOODS. CD/DL/LP

More rebel-rousing garage punk from Danish/Brazilian husband and wife team.

This August saw an appetite whetting reissue of The Courettes' first two albums, 2015's *Here Are The Courettes* and 2018's *We Are The Courettes*. Their exuberant third release *Back To Mono* (the clue is in the title and the pastiched sleeve) once again captures the drums/guitar duo Martin and Flavia Couri shimmy-shaking through the building blocks of pop. Too Late To Say I'm Sorry adheres to Phil Spector's Wall Of Sound in its desperate telegraphing of heartbreak over a giddying rush of noise; Hop The Twig rewrites Have Love Will Travel with Peter Gunn guitar twanging and a Medway delta vocal; Won't Let You Go is pure Wanda Jackson rasp-and-yelp. There's even a tribute to The Beatles' drummer with the swooning R.I.N.G.O.

Lois Wilson

Billy Bragg

★★★★

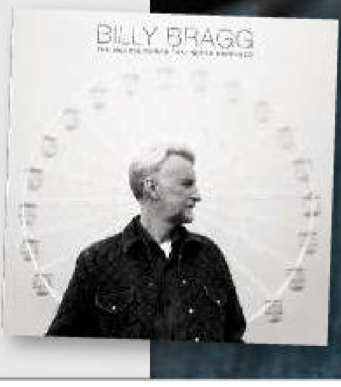
The Million Things That Never Happened

COOKING VINYL. CD/DL/LP

The Bearded Bard of Dorset achieves pedal-steel redemption.

THERE'S NOTHING barking about blaming a year-and-a-half's woes on the lockdown, but it drives the comfortingly coastal Billy Bragg's 10th solo LP inwards. An intimate, thematic country-blues-rock set recorded in Eastbourne with producer-arrangers Magic Number Romeo Stodart and Dave Izumi, here Bragg is empowered to face his own domestic failures in Should Have Seen It Coming ("I looked the other way") and ecclesiastical Hammond hymnal Pass It On ("those we remember are never gone"), hugged into private grief via "a dusty sheaf of letters from people now dead." Lonesome Ocean's pub piano unleashes a "raging storm" inside the bard, his guiding light delicately congregational in mellotron hymn I Will Be Your Shield, dedicated to a loved one, while family, health and "shattered norms" reveal "the gap between the man I am and the man I wanna be." Bragg ends having a cheeky Cockney knees-up with aspidistras, autodidacts and "angry old men", co-written with son Jack.

Andrew Collins



Billy Bragg: regrets, he has a few.

Jill Furmanovsky

Caravan

★★★★

It's None Of Your Business

SNAPPER. CD/DL/LP

The Canterbury legends return to form.

While 2013's *Paradise Filter* was a solid set exemplifying Caravan's song-craft and easy-going charm, here they've built a bridge between the group's current incarnation and their '70s heyday. The 10-minute title track freewheels through contrasting sections, with Pye Hastings singing of love like a giddy teenager, while some limber ensemble instrumental work is topped off by Jan Schelhaas' flamboyant synth solo. Geoffrey Richardson's viola and Jimmy Hastings' flute add Spare A Thought's elegiac feel, the song dedicated to friends "who never quite made it through", culminating in Hastings' remonstration of Covid deniers, his manchild voice now finding greater gravity through age and subject matter. Mainly recorded live in the studio, Caravan sound reinvigorated and energised here on their best album in, let's say, quite some time.

Mike Barnes

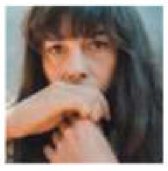
Madi Diaz

★★★★

History Of A Feeling

ANTI-. CD/DL/LP

Intimate and intense debut effort from emerging indie-folk artist.



Madi Diaz has more than honed her chops: the multi-instrumentalist learned piano at five, cut her teeth in Nashville, then for over a decade was a jobbing player for others. This intense collection laments a break-up, with the twist that her partner came out as transgender. Diaz too has spread her wings, revealing a Joni Mitchell-like songwriting talent. Opener Rage conveys its anger coolly: "Forgive and forget/Fuck you, fuck that…". Tender, literate and measured, Man In Me drapes a gorgeous vocal against ochre guitar and a shadowy piano's gravest notes. But there's wise-ass indie rock here too – Nervous could be vintage Liz Phair, and you are encouraged to whack up the volume. Healing and recovery arrive toward the end, in the shining epiphany of New Person, Old Place and its repeated, prayer-like pay-off line. Gorgeous and achingly candid.

Glyn Brown

Spearmint

★★★★

Holland Park

HITBACK. CD/DL/LP

Bright, superior pop from (and for) those old enough to know better.

Led by the enigmatic Shirley Lee, Spearmint were one of the Britpop bands that ultimately benefitted from their relative lack of success, still producing periodic albums of super-sweet, super-literate pop. *Holland Park* explores what it's like to be in a band, what music means and the passing of heroes. "Since Bowie died," Lee sings on the honeyed, string-driven song of the same name, "everything's changed." Cheekily referencing The Clash's Train In Vain, Rock'n'Roll Never Was ponders how it would have been if, for example, "Brian never played the Pinball, Mark never had The Fall". At 12-minutes long, the title track is pop history through the lens of Shirley's father's imaginary band – it's 10cc's Une Nuit A Paris for the 21st century. How amazing that Spearmint, all in middle age, clearly still keeping up the day jobs, can unite to make music this wonderful.

Daryl Easlea

Spencer Cullum

★★★★

Spencer Cullum's Coin Collection

FULL TIME HOBBY. DL/LP

Pedal steel player reinvented as psych-folk voyager.

Currently based in Nashville, where his pedal steel is much in demand, ex-pat Brit Cullum has penned a gorgeous love letter home, in particular to Canterbury's fabled psychedelic haven. Trainspotters will have a field day: is Tombre En Morceaux a purposeful homage to Pink Floyd's Remember A Day? Or Kevin Ayers' languid charm fused to Neu!'s lockdown chug on Dieterich Buxtehude? The Dusty Floor could be Floyd too, entwined with Soft Machine and Caravan DNA, while a crack Nashville squad of friends, including Caitlin Rose, channels Judy Dyble-era Fairport on Jack Of Fools. Cullum's Anglo mindset is so fastidious that with one exception (To Be Blinkered conjures up Ry Cooder), he's ditched the pedal steel for a more pliable nylon string guitar. He's singing the bulk of the songs too, in a soft-spun fashion to suit this misty trip down memory lane.

Martin Aston

Strand Of Oaks

★★★★

In Heaven

THIRTY TIGERS. CD/DL/LP

Tim Showalter's latest: "A hopeful reflection on love, loss and enlightenment."

STRAND OF OAKS
IN HEAVEN

"They're just songs/This should be fun," someone tells Tim Showalter, AKA Strand Of Oaks, on Horses At Night, but he's profoundly invested in *In Heaven*, another poignant reach for the stars. Part informed by the death of his wife's mother in a car crash, his subsequent defeat of alcohol dependency, and the couple's move from Philadelphia to Austin, Texas, the album channels big picture existentialism and the laser focus of grief into inspired, elemental songs spattered with the Crazy Horse leads of My Morning Jacket's Carl Broemel. Along the way there are thematic nods to the late John Prine and narrative appearances by Jimi Hendrix, the latter a gig-going pal for Showalter's late, much-loved cat in joyous elegy Jimi & Stan. It looks preposterous on paper, granted, but like so much of this instinctual, fully lived-in record, it touches and thrills.

James McNair

Cindy

★★★★

1:2

TOUGH LOVE. CD/DL/LP

Karina Gill's SF quartet balance Velvets minimalism with an evocatively British-style, introspective indie. Gill delivers sultry, deadpan one-person girl group melodramas like To Be True, where a woman wears an electronic tag under thigh-high leather boots. *JB*

JERRY DAVID DeCICCA

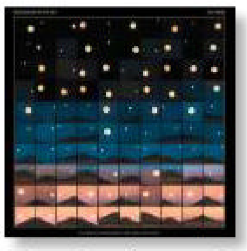
Jerry David DeCicca

★★★

The Unlikely Optimist And His Domestic Adventures

WORRIED SONGS. DL/LP

Cohen-esque musings on love, aging and coffee from former Black Swan: "Like a burnt piece of toast/A little too crispy to be enjoyed by most." *JB*



Explosions In The Sky

★★★★

Big Bend OST

TEMPORARY RESIDENCE. DL/LP

Soundtracking a doc about Big Bend National Park, TX suits the dramatic contrasts of EITS' panoramic instrumentalism. Ascending chords track Cubs with furry sweetness, while weightless grooves herald Sunrise and Bird Family. *JB*

SEDIMENTS WE MOVE

Charlotte Greve

★★★★

Sediments We Move

NEW AMSTERDAM. DL

Berlin choir Cantus Domus and Greve's band Wood River join in ambitious seven-part suite from the German saxophonist. Reflective chamber pieces warp in this ethereal union, Greve's breathy alto bristling against the heavenly voices. Unsettling in a good way. *AC*

Devin Hoff

★★★★

Voices From The Empty Moor

KILL ROCK STARS. CD/DL/LP

Excellent Anne Briggs tribute by US composer Hoff features Sharon Van Etten (Go Your Way), Emmett Kelly, Jim White and Julia Holter, whose dark recasting of Let No Man Steal Your Thyme is as beguiling as Briggs' was pertinent. *JB*

NULL AND VOID

Kid Acne

★★★★

Null And Void

LEWIS RECORDINGS. CD/DL/LP

Album five from South Yorks rapper doubles down on *Have A Word*'s scintillating storm of allusions. Chicago producer Spectacular Diagnostics' funk backings and guest bars from Vandal Savage and Jehst help deepen its underlying climate change narrative. *AC*

Ada Lea

★★★

One Hand Steering The Wheel The Other Sewing A Garden

SADDLE CREEK. CD/DL/LP

Montreal artist's second, inspired by Elena Ferrante's dense domestic dramas, wears its complexity lightly. Her indie guitar pop repeatedly hits the emotional centres. *JB*

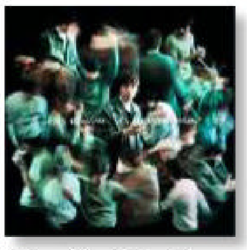
Jesse Malin

★★★

Sad And Beautiful World

WICKED COOL. CD/DL/LP

Roots-rock Zelig with a punk past, the New Yorker's double long-player has *Roots Rock* and *Radicals* discs. Lucinda Williams guests on the former, Bad Brains' HR intones darkly on the latter. *JB*



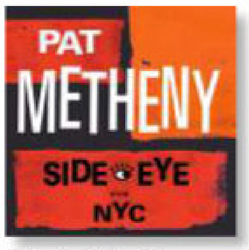
Matt Maltese

★★★★

Good Morning It's Not Tomorrow

NETTWERK. CD/DL/LP

South Londoner's doomed romances proliferate on album three. He finds drama in the mundane, falsetto reflections offset by spare melodies, brass and strings ensure the darkness never gets too deep. *AC*



Pat Metheny

★★★

Side-Eye NYC

BMG MODERN. LP/CD/DL

Jazz fusion superstar rides many moods alongside new musicians (James Francies, Anwar Marshall, Marcus Gilmore) on a 50/50 new/old split: reworkings (Timeline), questing solo turns (It Starts When We Disappear) and a rare all-out rocker (Lodger). *AC*

EXTENDED PLAY

Short Stories

Format microdosing benefits in reissue form this month, with a 25th anniversary edition of the Echoes 12-inch by **Directions** (Temporary Residence), a vehicle for Tortoise co-founder Bundy K Brown. The original pair of silvery, side-long ambient jazzy constructions are joined by a new Deadly Dragons remix and the 1995 demo, which reveals both Echoes' syncopated-rhythm roots and decisive influence on Four Tet. Irish songwriter **Brigid Mae Power**'s Burning Your Light EP (Fire 12-inch) connects her own wounded yet compelling folk to that of the late Jason Molina, with her version of Songs: Ohia's Didn't It Rain, and five more covers including a gorgeous Leavin' On Your Mind (Patsy Cline). Cosmic forces also draw **Ringo Starr** and **Billy Idol** together, insomuch as both have EPs in September and Idol's The Roadside is on George Harrison's Dark Horse label. Songs range from glowering Mark Lanegan portent (the excellent lead track Bitter Taste) to seamy rocker Rita Hayworth (admittedly, a well-worn lexicon for Idol but very well done). With his confidently-titled Let's Change The World EP (UMe) Ringo Starr is also on familiar ground, both ideologically and musically, in particular an energetic cover of Rock Around The Clock that features Joe Walsh on guitar.

Directions Echoes

BRIGID MAE POWER

Revolution time: Ringo Starr votes for change.

Evan Parker

★★★★

Winns Win

BYRD OUT. DL/LP/MC

On nine improvs inspired by designer/activist William Morris, Parker's famed circular breathing has his soprano sax constructing trance-like trails of notes – from soothing birdsong to hard staccato hailstones – rammed with melodic surprises. *AC*

A Southern Gothic

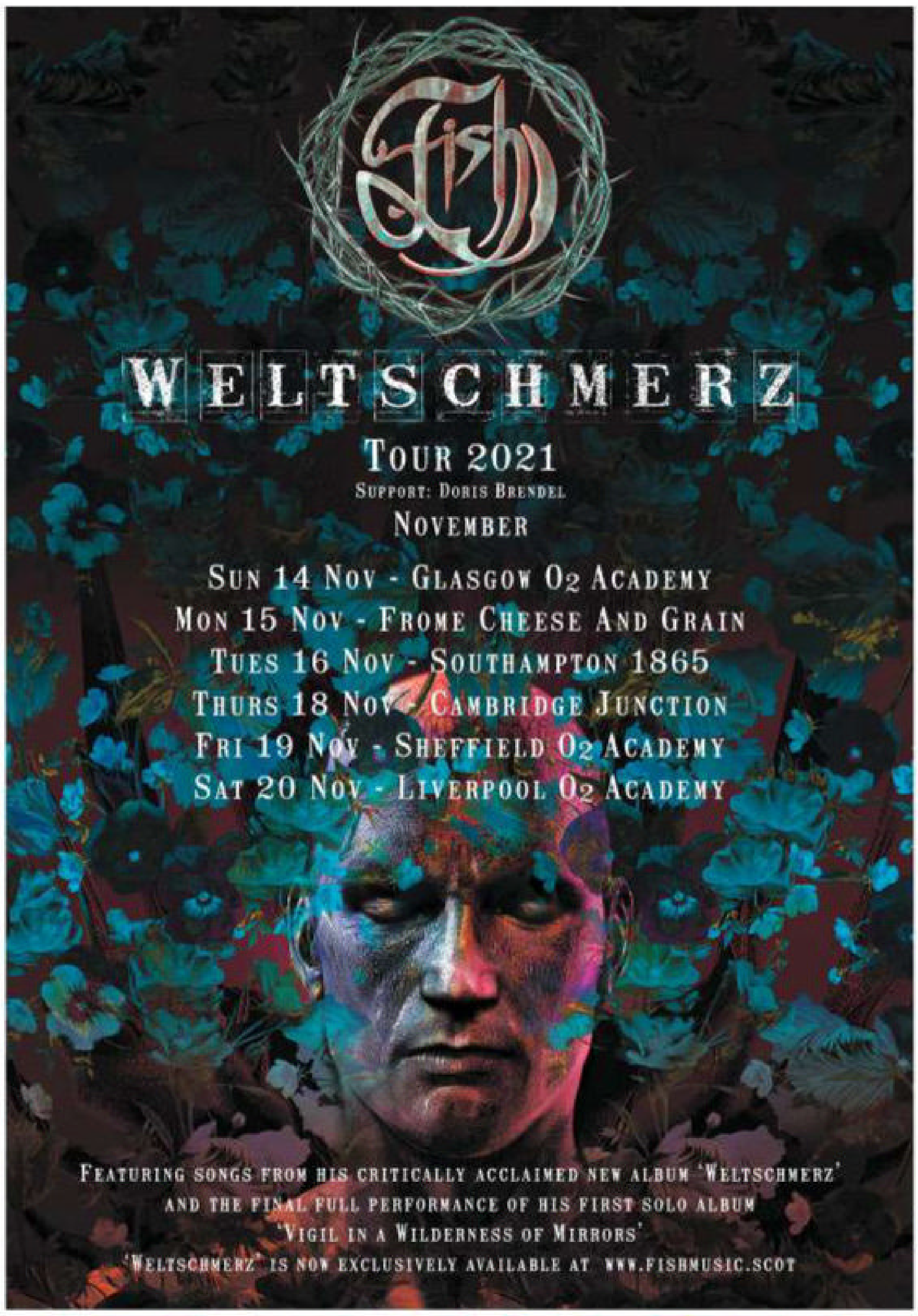
Adia Victoria

★★★★

A Southern Gothic

PARLOPHONE. CD/DL/LP

A meditation on Southern mythology, inspired by William Faulkner, Alan Lomax et al. Folk, blues and country meet an instinctively tuneful ear on home recorded songs, later finessed by T Bone Burnett with added Jason Isbell, Margo Price and Matt Berninger. *JB*



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Justin Sullivan

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Chelsea mornings to Sunset pigs

In the solo years that forever cemented the image of Joni Mitchell, what was she keeping from us? Asks **Jim Irvin**.

Joni Mitchell

★★★★

Archives – Vol. 2: The Reprise Years (1968-1971)

RHINO. CD/DL/LP

I BLAME BOB DYLAN. The man with buried treasure in every corner. His hugely successful *Bootleg Series* (itself 30 years old this year) has spawned high demand for the vault openings of the worthies. Neil Young eventually saw the benefit of showing his workings. Now Joni Mitchell is doing it.

Yet, although Joni is often spoken of as Dylan's equal – not least by herself – I don't sense in her fans the same desire that haunts the Bobnuts, the desire to get to the bottom of the mystery. And she doesn't have the numerous, mythologised, complete-but-abandoned projects that litter the output of capricious ol' Neil Young. Most Joni fans I know are content to wallow in her marvellous, officially sanctioned catalogue because, going by the material in this bigger-than-it-need-be collection, Joni, unlike Dylan, has mostly been an astute judge of her best work. She has a painter's instinct for knowing what mark to make and when to leave the canvas alone, she has clarity of tone and conjures pin-sharp imagery. If Dylan is all about sprawl and obfuscation, Joni is surely about concision and aptness. Therefore, faced with five CDs of imperfection and repetition, it's tempting to ask: what's the point of all this?

Well, obviously, it's fascinating to hear things that have entered into legend, like her pitch for the title song to the movie, Midnight Cowboy. It's here in two demos, one a bit awkward, one more assured. Not bad, but hard to imagine it having the impact of Everybody's Talkin', so someone was right not to pursue it. There's a beautiful unreleased song, Come To The Sunshine (not the Van Dyke Parks tune), and the legendary Hunter, discarded from *Blue*. With its multiple strummed acoustics and subtle drumming, Carey style, it feels instantly familiar, but also too close to a couple of *Blue*'s other tracks. She also dropped the fine Urge For Going, her "protest song at the coming of winter". Each of the 10 she chose brought something unique to the table. Arguably, these wouldn't have. Shelving them helped make *Blue* perfect.

As did abandoning an alternative approach to River, a copper-bottomed masterpiece, but here with oddly tentative French horns burbling at the end. They make it more Christmassy, perhaps, but otherwise add little value. Removing them was a smart decision. You can hear Joni implicitly making such assessments throughout this collection. A song called Jeremy is demoed, played live and recorded for *Song To A Seagull*, but never released. It's a bleak ditty about someone jailed for drug use, and maybe she realised that her take on crime and punishment was a little romanticised, a little patronising. She records Conversation for both *Song To A Seagull* and *Clouds* and rejects it both times. This, with previously discarded songs Blue Boy and The Priest, finally makes it onto *Ladies Of The Canyon*, but it's one of her duller songs. Part of her knew that.

There's a fine recording from early 1969 at Carnegie Hall ("It's long way from Saskatoon, Saskatchewan…"). The sound is good and there are several striking moments, like a medley of Circle Game and Little Green, the former an early, perfect lyric, the latter, a heartbreaker, as we know, but here a work-in-progress with a clunky chord shift in the ascent to the title line. And there's a delightful cover of Dino Valenti's love anthem, Get Together, where she reharmonises the melody, slightly throwing the crowd she's asked to sing along. This show is worth hearing.

An earlier concert recording, from Le Hilbou Coffee House, Ottowa in March 1968, was recorded by Jimi Hendrix. (From his diary: "Talked with Joni Mitchell on the phone. I think I'll record her tonight with my excellent tape recorder, knock on wood… hmmm… can't find any wood… everything's plastic.") Once you've gotten over that crazy detail, it's unremarkable next to the Carnegie Hall show. However, a complete BBC Live In Concert recorded in December 1970, where she is joined by current old man James Taylor, is splendid, and demonstrates a marked leap forward in her sound. The way Taylor takes over the introductions once he comes on is notable: "Here's another song Joan wrote…"

Less fascinating are the scrappy tapes recorded in her friend Jane Lurie's apartment in New York's Chelsea district (as in "Woke up, it was a Chelsea morning"), including performances where her voice is inaudible, and bits of conversation you won't listen to much. Some off-air fan recordings of a John Peel session for the BBC, with stalwart British arranger John Cameron (Donovan, Bobbie Gentry) providing accompaniment are disappointingly lo-fi, though they offer an interesting anomaly: early Joni with a backing group.

Indeed, the enduring image of Joni Mitchell – flaxen-haired, flutey-voiced hippy goddess alone with her guitar or piano – effectively only lasted for the few years covered by this box. Once she'd switched to Asylum Records – and after the transitional *For The Roses*, a more oblique *Blue* – she landed on her future direction with the jazz-burnished sophistication of her second masterpiece, *Court & Spark*, a truer direction for a woman nearing 30, raised on Lambert, Hendricks & Ross, who loved to dance. The new style required skilled, supple musicians around her. She'd never again go back to being alone in the studio.

The box promises to be a handsome object (only digital files of the music were available to review) and if you're a Mitchell completist or just love owning stuff, it looks like a winner. But for the casual listener, there's rather too much here that gets in the way of the things you might wish to hear again. Team Joni could, and should, boil it down to a single disc of highlights that would make a worthy companion to the regular albums, and display the focus her fans have come to expect.

Joni Mitchell
ARCHIVES • VOLUME 2

"You can hear Joni implicitly making decisions throughout."

BACK STORY: ALL SIDES, NOW

- This is the second volume in Joni's Mitchell's career-spanning and maybe career-closing *Archive* series, gathering the demos, outtakes, some audio vérité and three complete concert recordings (recorded by Reprise, the BBC and, er, Jimi Hendrix) from the period she was releasing records for Reprise – her first four albums. Features 122 tracks, 87 songs, the rest are introductions and documentary. The complete 5-CD set is also being released digitally. A 10-LP vinyl edition will be limited to 4,000 copies.

Getty (2)

Before the spark: Joni MItchell, "flaxen-haired, flutey-voiced hippy goddess".

normil hawaiians · dark world

Normil Hawaiians

★★★

Dark World

UPSET THE RHYTHM. CD/DL/LP

South London post-punk collective's formative years, 1979-81.

Following album reissues *More Wealth Than Money* (1982) and *What Goes On* (1984), *Dark World* scopes Normil Hawaiians' origins on 45 and EP, a 1980 Peel session, plus rarities. Timeless post-punk tropes abound: bass lines probe against regimented drums, guitars slash and vocals strain at the leash, exorcising fear and loathing in the era of Thatcher-Reagan hegemony. Members came and went; 15-year-old Janet Armstrong – sister of Normils guitarist Kevin (subsequently a Bowie sidekick) – fronts stroppy rocker I Wanna and the brooding Ventilation, bridging Delta 5 and X-Ray Spex. Saxes and synths push into different spheres, some jazzier and improvised. A cover of Zappa's Uncle Green Genes is more proto-indie. Another cover, of Eraserhead soundtrack classic In Heaven (recorded seven years before the Pixies' version), is a beguiling mix of solemn and choral, while Exhibit and I Feel Like point toward their subsequent albums' wilder Krautrock/industrial murk.

Martin Aston

Various

★★★

Riddim Poetry

INTO THE DEEP TREASURY. DL/LP

Obscure French reggae delights from the 1980s.

Following the success of Bob Marley and hybrids from Serge Gainsbourg and Bernard Lavilliers, the French reggae scene of the 1980s was stoked by pirate radio and neighbourhood sound-systems. This compilation gathers forgotten gems that blend reggae with North African, Guadeloupean and West African styles, as well as funk, jazz, and disco, to yield something distinctive. Aside from breathy singer Tchai's adaptation of Yoko Ono's Every Man, which benefits from the competent backing of British band Merger, everything here is Francophone. Cheb Kader's Reggae Rai blends North African rhythms with reggae undercurrents, Malian singer Nawari delivers his Zon Mina Bali in Bambara, and Ras Abbya's debut single Love Love is sung in Creole. Elsewhere, there is a trippy instrumental from soundtrack composer Jean Michel Bertrand and politically relevant material from the Nantes-based Apartheid Not. There is plenty here to explore and savour.

David Katz

Step By Step

★★★★

I Always Wanted To Be In The Band

DEMON. LP

Milwaukee dance funk, first out on Brunswick in 1977. Prince was a fan.

Formed in 1968 by the then 19-year-old honeyed falsetto-voiced singer and drummer Johnnie Gee, Step By Step were a 12-piece soul and funk band from Milwaukee that also featured Gee's brothers Jerome and Dewitt Gee. They debuted with 1972's emotional Time After Time on the Cuca label, which led to support slots with The Chi-Lites, who in turn introduced Step By Step to their label, Brunswick, who duly signed the band and issued this 1977 long-player, the collective's only album. *I Always Wanted To Be In The Band* is a perfect blend of club classics – the best, Cash Money, is an energetic disco dancer full of fan-faring horns, soaring synth lines and a catchy mantra-like chorus chant – and emphatic slower numbers, such as I'm Glad, an uplifting hymnal, sweet but with enough grit not to be saccharine.

Lois Wilson

The J Ann C Trio

★★★

At Tan-Tar-A

SUNDAZED/MODERN HARMONIC. CD/DL/LP

First ever reissue for 1966 private pressing reveals a slice of Tiki lounge rockabilly-folk sensuality.

Writing about this 1966 release in 2013 private press bible Enjoy The Experience, Endless Boogie's Paul Major employed the phrases "freeform garage space music", "heavy Twilight Zone feelings" and "drugs from another dimension". Now, context is important here. If you'd discovered this long-player in a cut-out bin for a dollar, it might well blow your mind. However, when purchased on green vinyl as a legitimate reissue it would be advisable to adjust your expectations. Recorded at a high-end Ozarks country club where Ann, Carl and Terry were the house band, this is eerie suburban rockabilly, adrift somewhere between garage and lounge. It's no lost psych classic from space, but if you tune in to the sensual vocals and deep-bass rhythms of Ann Delrene, especially on the reverb-laden proto-Cramps groove of Voodoo Doll or the trio's cover of Wanda Jackson's Funnel Of Love, you might just think someone had spiked your Tahitian punch with a cheeky Valium.

Andrew Male

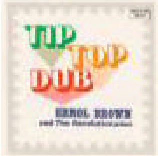
Errol Brown And The Revolutionaries

★★★

Tip Top Dub

DOCTOR BIRD. CD/DL

Two CDs of uncomplicated dubs from Treasure Isle.



Jamaican producer Sonia Pottinger ran Tip Top distribution from her base on Orange Street, Kingston and retained the High Note label for her most hit-bound material. Following Duke Reid's death in 1975, she took over his Treasure Isle studio and released a series of sublime dub albums crafted by Reid's nephew Errol Brown, who kept his output largely gimmick-free. Thus, on *Tip Top Dub*, clean mixes of Justin Hinds' Rig-ma-Roe Game and Well Pleased and Satisfied's Walla Walla draw the listener with just the right amount of delay. If dubs of Al Brown's rendition of Sitting In Limbo and Ronnie Davis's adaptation of Ballistic Affair lack the dynamism of a King Tubby, Lee Perry or Errol Thompson mix, there is still plenty here to engage the listener, because the musical backing of Sly Dunbar and the Revolutionaries remains rock-solid throughout.

David Katz

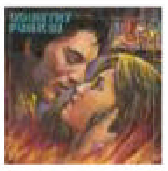
Various

★★★★

Country Funk III: 1975-1982

LIGHT IN THE ATTTIC. CD/DL/LP

More funk in the trunk from the label that brought you the *Country Funk 1* and *2*.



Given that vinyl made an unexpected comeback in the digital age, let's hear it for the return in physical form of those mixtapes lovingly curated by music nerd friends. US label Light In The Attic specialises in lovingly curated music-nerdery. This is the third volume of its fine *Country Funk* series: 17 tracks with a disco-friendly beat replete with horns, female backing singers and, given the era, parping keyboards. There are some big names: Dolly Parton, cute on Sure Thing; JJ Cale, odd but cool on Nobody But You; Conway Twitty, dark and sexy on Night Fires. However, top marks must go to lesser knowns like Travis Wammack, whose Do Me, with its swampy guitar and rock star solo, might not be purist funk but definitely comes right to the point. Great packaging too; the sleeve's nod to Burning Love – written for Elvis by Dennis Linde whose Down To The Station closes the album – is pure pulp fiction.

Sylvie Simmons

Nancy Sinatra

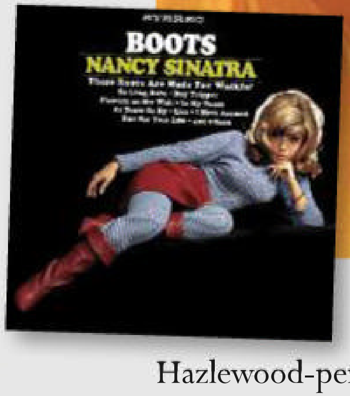
★★★★

Boots

LIGHT IN THE ATTIC. CD/DL/LP/MC

On its 55th anniversary, her debut remastered with two bonus tracks and deluxe booklet. Formats include 8-track cartridge!

Impossibly cool: Nancy Sinatra.



THE STORY goes that when *Boots'* producer Lee Hazlewood dropped by the Sinatra house with some of his songs, Nancy chose one he planned to sing himself: These Boots Are Made For Walkin'. Frank Sinatra, looking up from his newspaper, agreed. And that tough/innocent '60s girl-singer mix, backed by the Wrecking Crew (the opening bass line is brilliant) still sounds impossibly cool, like a Tarantino movie in one song. Daughter, like father, was an interpretive singer of songs, including It Ain't Me Babe, As Tears Go By and – a really interesting cover – Day Tripper. The bonuses? The City Never Sleeps At Night – the Hazlewood-penned B-side of the These Boots… single – sounds like an American yé-yé song; while the previously unreleased For Some is delivered in a slow, soulful, big production with horns and backing singers, plus lyrics and attitude which are the polar opposite to These Boots's.

Sylvie Simmons

Ron Joy/Boots Enterprises Inc.

Grateful Dead

★★★★

Listen To The River: St. Louis '71 '72 '73

RHINO. CD/LP

Twenty CDs of peak live Dead. Strap yourselves in!

"This is the only place we like to play around here, and if we can't come back to this theatre we won't come back to this town – which means you'll have to go to Kiel Auditorium and listen to Grand Funk Railroad…" Thus begins the Dead's concert at the Fox Theatre in St. Louis on 9/12/71. Over 20 CDs, this chunky new box encompasses four more full '71 and '72 shows from the ornate old Fox, plus – a shock – two '73 gigs from the Kiel. Graduation to the big arena did not, however, materially compromise the questing spirit of the band on these excellent shows. If you can't commit to the whole package, the 10/12/71 show is available as a 3-CD standalone, but it's not by some distance the best one here: that honour goes to 18/10/72, with a filigreed Bird Song and an amazing hour-plus jam that incorporates Playing In The Band (twice), a very jazzy Dark Star, Morning Dew and a rupturing Phil Lesh bass solo. Endurance pays off, too: Disc 20 is a beauty, from the mellow but exploratory 30/10/73.

John Mulvey

Okyerema Asante

★★★

Drum Message

STRUT. CD/DL/LP

Repackaged reissue of loose Afro-jazz fusion project.

Ghanaian master percussionist Okyerema Asante got to America backing Hugh Masekela. There, a chance encounter with Plunky Branch brought him into Afrocentric funk act Oneness Of Juju. *Drum Message* was cut in 1977 with Oneness musicians plus Gil Scott-Heron collaborator Brian Jackson playing subdued piano on two tracks. The percussion is multidimensional throughout, with traditional polyrhythms offset by birdcalls and peppery accents, as heard most forcefully on Adowa, but much of the album is loosely improvised, its meandering melodies aimlessly drifting. Peaks include the lilting groove of Asante Sana, with its rousing female choruses, and the shimmering Sabi floor-shaker, though Never Fly Away From The Funk and Play A Sweet Rhythm On Them Drums are heavily commercial. Only previously issued in a small run on CD in 1993, this new edition is totally remastered, with bonus tracks and a fascinating Asante interview.

David Katz

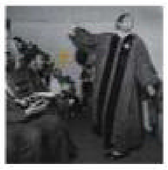
Pastor TL Barrett

★★★★★

I Shall Wear A Crown

NUMERO GROUP. CD/DL/LP

Six CD (or five LP) complete recordings of the civil rights activist/preacher/conman.



In 1968, former hospital mortician and bible school graduate Thomas Lee Barrett started a youth-focused ministry at Chicago's Mt. Zion Baptist Church. Working with Jesse Jackson's Operation Breadbasket, he set up the Youth For Christ Choir who in 1971 recorded a debut LP, *Like A Ship*. Self-released, the album disappeared until, in 2010, it was reissued by Light In The Attic. Its unique blend of the teenage choir, Barrett's melancholy imploring, and Richard Evans and Charles Pittman's bass-drums soul groove struck a chord. Today, Barrett's sound has been Kanye-sampled and is ubiquitous across TV and adverts. This lavishly assembled box proves *Like A Ship* was no fluke. Barrett – charged in 1989 for running a pyramid scheme within his church – has an authentic desperation to his preaching, veering into wild, abstract sermonising. It's a blend of sweet and rough, innocent and guilty that has a redemptive euphoric potency.

Andrew Male

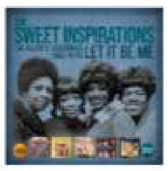
The Sweet Inspirations

★★★★

Let It Be Me: The Atlantic Recordings (1967-1970)

SOULMUSIC. CD

"The pillars of the Atlantic Church Of '60s Soul," according to Jerry Wexler.



This Atlantic line-up of The Sweet Inspirations provided gospel-rich backgrounds for Aretha and Elvis, but between 1967 and 1970 the quartet – Cissy Houston, Myrna Smith, Estelle Brown and Sylvia Shemwell – also recorded five albums. These, bookended by *The Sweet Inspirations* and *Sweet Sweet Soul*, are collected here alongside what was their intended sixth album, produced by Dave Crawford and Brad Shapiro and featuring Houston's replacement Ann Williams. The majority of the material comprises covers – Why (Am I Treated So Bad), What The World Needs Now Is Love, That's How Strong My Love Is and so on – their versions fusing Southern harmony, Memphis feeling and soulful innovation. However, their sole US pop hit, the swooning Sweet Inspiration, was written specifically for them by Dan Penn and Spooner Oldham.

Lois Wilson

Flowered up: The Mk I Charlatans (from left) Jon Baker, Martin Blunt, Tim Burgess, Jon Brookes, Rob Collins.

Getting along

Spanning three decades, a box set to celebrate the fallen and the living. By **Lois Wilson**.

The Charlatans

★★★★

A Head Full Of Ideas

THEN RECORDINGS. CD/DL/LP

THIS YEAR marks 31 years since The Charlatans, a group forever associated with Manchester but formed in the West Midlands by ex-Makin' Time bassist Martin Blunt with his twentysomething pals off the garage/Mod scene – drummer Jon Brookes, organist Rob Collins, guitarist Jon Baker, lead singer Tim Burgess – issued their first single Indian Rope, a riot of '60s psych influences and dancefloor urgency. It is also 25 years since Rob Collins, the heart and soul of the band, died.

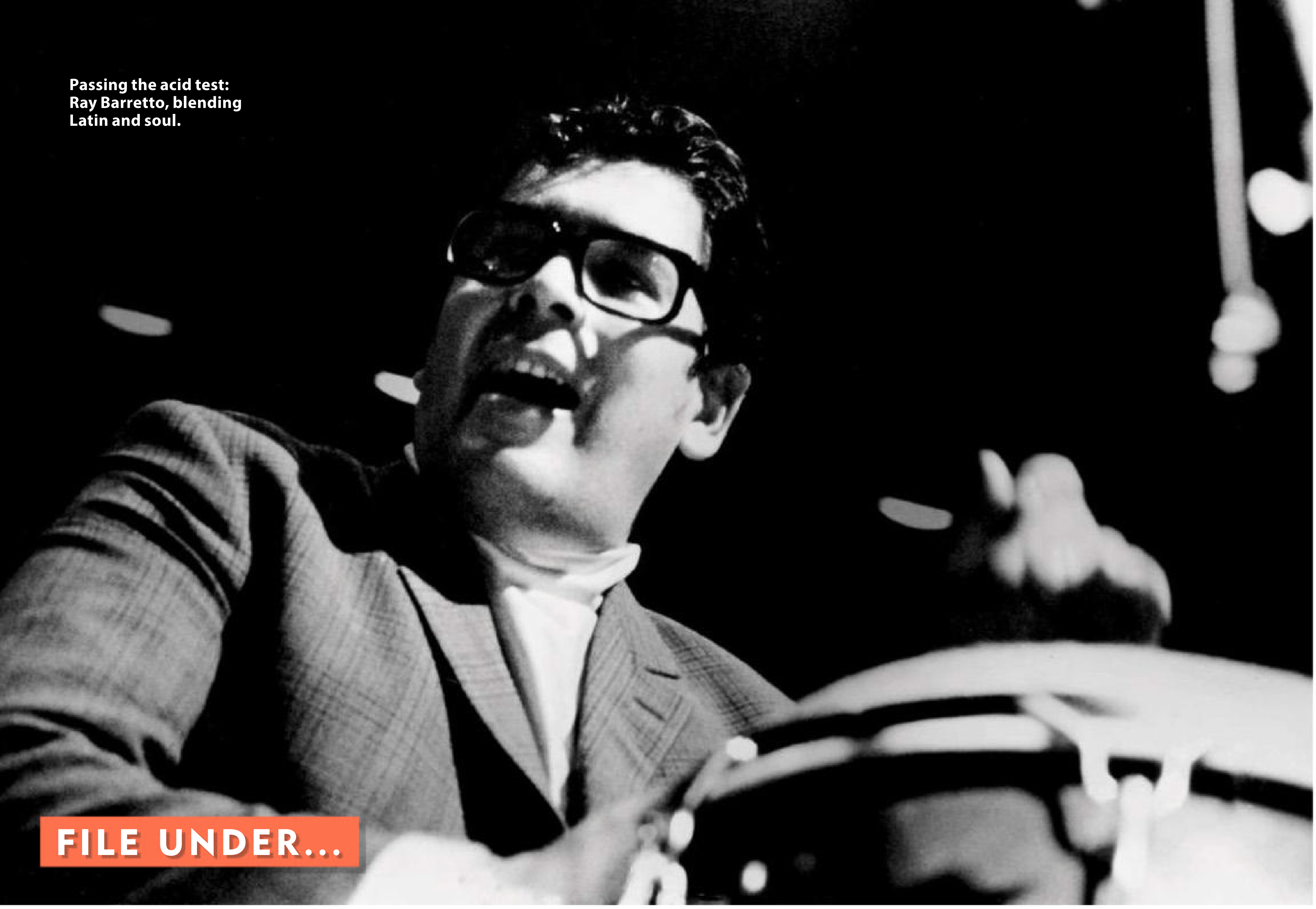
Using the Hammond organ as his emotional vocabulary, Collins injected the group's terrific early run of singles – Indian Rope; The Only One I Know; Then; Weirdo – with an energetic cool, and their live shows with a fierce intensity. His memory looms large over this career-spanning set. Five discs and a 7-inch map their 13-album career via a well-chosen cherry-pick of singles, live tracks, demos, and remixes by The Orb, The Chemical Brothers, Sleaford Mods, Norman Cook and Jagz Kooner. Each disc is named after a lyric from their biggest hit, 1996's One To Another – for example, the demos disc is titled *Pleased To Meet You*.

Not expected to last beyond the baggy-era they helped define with The Only One I Know – its amalgamated Byrds/Deep Purple groove a staple of indie student nights – The Charlatans nevertheless outlived scene spearheads The Stone Roses and Happy Mondays to become one of the UK's most dependable indie rock outfits. This they achieved partly through hard graft and consistent touring, and partly through lead singer Tim Burgess's intuitive ability to read and react to changing, and troubling, times. Most recently Burgess emerged as a hero of the pandemic with his Twitter listening parties.

The Charlatans have never really stood still; from the shoegazey distortion-breakdown of 1992's Can't Even Be Bothered (by which time ex-Waltones guitarist Mark Collins had replaced Jon Baker); the Mod pop and soulful rhythm of 1994's Can't Get Out Of Bed, which drew a cold-call from Paul Weller congratulating them on the single he wished he'd written; the Stonesy/Lennon-styled country funk of 1995's Just When You're Thinkin' Things Over (released the same week that Blur and Oasis battled it out for Number 1, it made Number 12), to the aforesaid One To Another, a Number 3 and Collins' last stand, its mesh of organ riffage and Chemical Brothers drum loops recorded during a period of peak narcotic excess.

Nineteen days after Collins' death, The Charlatans were supporting Oasis at Knebworth with stand-in keyboardist Martin Duffy from Primal Scream. Then, in '97, they recruited another Midland keysman, Tony Rogers, and began making records that sounded more grown up, more heroic: Forever (1999); Love Is The Key (2001); My Foolish Pride (2010, the last to feature Jon Brookes who died in 2013 from a brain tumour). The most recent recording here, which closes the second disc of singles, is 2018's Totally Eclipsing: "We continue, because we get along," Burgess sings. And perhaps the answer to The Charlatans' resilience and enduring appeal is as simple as that.

THE CHARLATANS
A HEAD FULL OF IDEAS


Passing the acid test: Ray Barretto, blending Latin and soul.

FILE UNDER…

Spanish Harlem incident

The Fania label arose in the Big Apple. **Jim Irvin** hears it blossom.

NEW YORK, March 1964, and a new label, Fania, is launched by Latin bandleader Johnny Pacheco and his lawyer Jerry Masucci, primarily to take control of Pacheco's recordings. He had been born in the Dominican Republic, was uprooted to New York in 1946, aged 11, and became a star playing Latin music in the charanga style. Though mambo kings like Tito Puente and Tito Rodriguez ('tito' means uncle) were still filling the uptown clubs they'd ruled since the cha-cha-chá craze of the 1950s, their music felt too square and remote for second generation Puerto Rican and Cuban kids raised in Spanish Harlem and Brooklyn, who wanted a sound that spoke to them the way blues, Motown and soul did for their African-American neighbours. Kids like trombonist Johnny Colon and self-taught Afro-Filipino street-tough Joe Bataan, who began to experiment with soul and blues changes over Latin rhythms while singing about their real lives, in English. This kind of hybrid – a pop-soul song, sometimes with a call-and-response aspect, driven by percussion polyrhythms – became known as a "boogaloo", probably after a big New York dance hit of spring 1965, Boo-Ga-Loo by Tom And Jerrio.

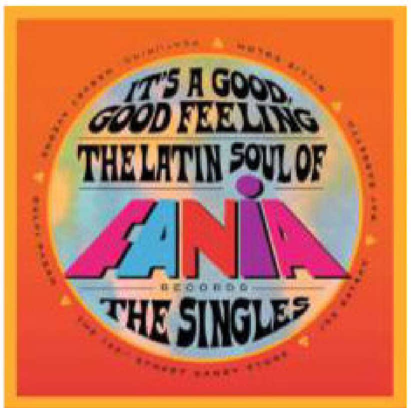
The search for Latin soul wasn't new. An older alumnus of Tito Puente's band, conga player Mongo Santamaría, helped point the way with his huge, mainstream hit, an irresistible, Latinised version of Herbie Hancock's Watermelon Man in 1962. His subsequent covers of hits for CBS were dubbed "Latin soul" and others of his generation, like timbale player and bandleader Willie Bobo, developed the sound. But boogaloos were more popular with younger musicians, not least because the older generation bristled at their slangy, slice-of-life lyrics and the implication that traditional homeland styles were no longer enough.

Within a year, Fania was signing other artists and one of them, the energetic Harvey Averne, took over day-to-day running of the label, signing important players in the rise of Latin soul, among them Santamaría, Larry Harlow and Bataan, who, influenced by doo wop and boogaloo, revamped The Impressions' Gypsy Woman as his first single, quickly following it with an influential album *Riot!*. But it was in the realm of the 7-inch single where boogaloo and Latin soul experiments made the most sense.

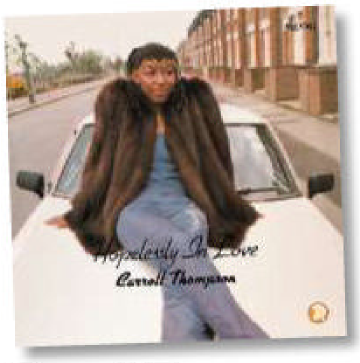
It's A Good Good Feeling: The Latin Soul Of Fania Records (Craft) ★★★★ collects 89 examples, all of them 7-inch sides released by the label between 1965-1975, across 4-CDs, with an edited 28 track edition on double vinyl. It's a splendid, bustling, full-colour celebration of this brief, fascinating form and, mostly, it cooks. Curiously, the biggest boogaloo hit, Joe Cuba's Bang Bang, though in the Fania vaults, isn't here, presumably because it was originally on the Tico label.

Some cuts, such as Ray Barretto's Soul Drummers and A Deeper Shade Of Soul – both from his 1967 album *Acid* – nail the hybrid perfectly, perhaps because he'd been looking for it for a while. In the linernotes to *Acid*, singer Pete Bonet describes how, after Barretto's smash Latin soul forerunner El Watusi in 1962, his boss had felt "caught between two worlds…the world of beautiful conservative music and the world of swinging music." That tension erupts in the best tracks here. True, some of the concepts have dated, Bobby Valentin's Bad Breath and Harvey Averne's The Micro Mini are pretty embarrassing, but their energy endures, which also makes up for the occasionally shaky sound quality of some of the masters.

Later signings like Ralfi Pagan fundamentally just sang soul, the Latin element dialled down, while others signalled Fania's future as the home of salsa, the new Latin sound which managed to be both swinging and conservative, and would keep Fania's all-star players in work for the rest of their lives.



> "A splendid, bustling, full-colour celebration."



Carroll Thompson

★★★★★

Hopelessly In Love

TROJAN. CD/DL/LP

40th anniversary reissue of the flawless lovers rock classic; on coloured vinyl.

Carroll Thompson grew up listening to reggae, jazz and soul – Marley's *Catch A Fire*, Ella Fitzgerald's Cole Porter recordings, Minnie Riperton's *Perfect Angel* in particular – and when making her own sound she fused them together. The fruit, this 1981 debut, was not just a classic lovers rock album (voted Number 1 by readers in How To Buy, MOJO 329) but a classic, period. Thompson's songs – eight self-penned, the other two co-writes – express warmth and have a true affinity with their subject matter: love, loss, family. Her soulful vocal, meanwhile, is tender and sweet but with enough grit to stop it becoming saccharine or soppy. The band, featuring Jah Bunny, Cleveland Watkiss and Vin Gordon, are first rate too, intuitive and with a knack for both melody and roots.

Lois Wilson

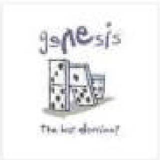
Genesis

★★★★

The Last Domino?

VIRGIN. CD/DL/LP

Prog pop-rockers' reunion tour best-of.



Released to accompany their upcoming Last Domino? live dates, this 27-song collection is slanted towards the current Genesis line-up. It's Tony Banks', Phil Collins' and Mike Rutherford's bespoke playlist, meaning disciples of original vocalist Peter Gabriel should approach with caution; *The Last Domino?* doesn't venture back beyond 1973. In doing so, it's a more streamlined listen, though. Judicious sequencing means late-era deep cut Fading Lights segues comfortably into The Cinema Show, despite an 18-year age gap and a different lead singer. The irritating I Can't Dance was a big hit but suggests Genesis's creative flame was dwindling by 1991. Still, for every silky power ballad (In Too Deep) there's some manic art-pop (Mama) or Thatcher-era prog (Home By The Sea) to redress the balance. Some purists will moan, but these songs helped Genesis fill stadiums in the last century and enabled this reunion.

Mark Blake

Muddy Waters

★★★★

The Montreux Years

BMG. CD/DL/LP

The quintessential Chicago bluesman live.

There can be no more appropriate manifesto for Muddy Waters than Nobody Knows Chicago Like I Do. The opening track of this collection of three live performances at the Montreux Jazz Festival between 1972-77, it announces his reign as the Windy City blues monarch. Muddy holds the centre as if by centrifugal force while allowing sidemen such as harpist Junior Wells, guitarists Buddy Guy and Bob Margolin and bassist Bill Wyman to soar. It also serves as a best-of, featuring classics such as Mannish Boy, Rollin' And Tumblin', I'm Your Hoochie Coochie Man and the show-stopper – from whence this magazine got its name – Got My Mojo Working. Despite being recorded in his twilight years, Muddy's vocal remains powerful, his signature slide guitar slices razor sharp, and his ability to turn a music born in blue into celebratory joy undiminished.

Michael Simmons

Small Faces

★★★★

Live 1966

NICE. CD/DL/LP

First official release of Belgian show, January 1966, their earliest recorded set.

1966 would be a banner year for the Small Faces, and it began with these two blistering live sets – with new organist Ian McLagan – recorded on January 9 at the Twenty Club in Mouscron, Belgium. Steve Marriott gives a shout out to the Mods in the audience before launching into Whatcha Gonna Do Bout It – "our current Britishit" – and the two sets merge into one long jam, bashed out at maximum volume and with an abandoned spirit, peaking and subsiding in superb team telepathy. Propelled by Marriott's slashing guitar and exhortational vocals, the Small Faces transmute blues and soul tropes into a seamless strip that in Plum Nellie includes snatches from Baby Please Don't Go, Parchman Farm Blues, In The Midnight Hour and Land Of 1,000 Dances. The second set has a version of Please Please Please, an unrecorded song called Strange, and a run through stoner B-side Grow Your Own ("gear"). They'd continue this approach on their first Decca album, but here it is, fully formed, raw and impossibly alive.

Jon Savage

Whitfield's wonders: (clockwise from left) Gladys Knight & The Pips; Edwin Starr; Undisputed Truth; David Ruffiny.

Funk and fire

The producer who put psych in Motown's soul. By **Geoff Brown**.

Various

★★★★

Psychedelic Soul: Produced By Norman Whitfield

ACE. CD/DL

PRE-EMINENT architect in the evolution of psychedelic soul at Motown, Norman Whitfield was a prolific songwriter during the '60s, working well with Marvin Gaye (co-writing 1963's US R&B Number 2 hit Pride And Joy), and forming a good partnership with Barrett Strong. But his ambitions were often thwarted while Smokey Robinson and Holland-Dozier-Holland monopolised A-listers like The Supremes, The Four Tops and The Temptations. Then Whitfield produced I Heard It Through The Grapevine.

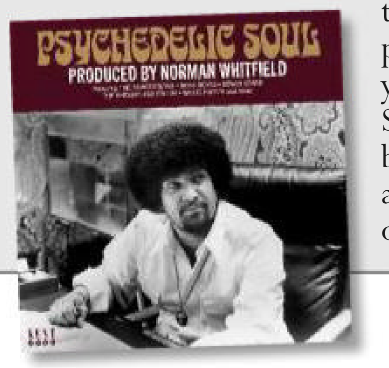
The third act to record it, Gladys Knight & The Pips' gospel-powered 1966 version scorched to Number 2 in the US pop charts (barely Top 50 in the UK), but when he returned to one of his two earlier versions, producing an ominous, moody Marvin Gaye take, his reputation was cemented. Gaye's too.

That familiar, brooding work is where *Psychedelic Soul* starts, followed by Gladys Knight's The Look Of Love, as she invests the sweet Bacharach & David ballad with fiery, yearning passion. To fire, Whitfield next added funk – The Temptation's Psychedelic Shack (1969) is this album's calling card, unveiling Dennis Edwards' thunderous lead vocal. The next Whitfield signifier chosen by compiler Bob Stanley: 1972's US Number 1 Papa Was A Rollin' Stone, bass guitar and ticking hi-hat leading into a steadily building introduction – wah wah guitar, strings and brass – before the Tempts' individual tones add colour to the storytelling lyric.

But as Whitfield gradually sidelined vocals and lyrics in increasingly elongated productions, The Temptations rebelled, and his Motown influence waned. Still, he'd produced one of their very best LPs, *Sky's The Limit*, not represented here. But the Tempts' former mighty tenor David Ruffin feels the Whitfield funk on the title track to 1974's solo LP *Me And Rock & Roll Are Here To Stay*.

Exiting Motown to set up Whitfield, funk of a different kind blossomed on Rose Royce's Ooh Boy, recorded for the movie Car Wash, a gliding track with Gwen Dickey's light vocal floating on the supple bass. But in general, he was happier with a gospel holler. It Should've Been Me, his 1972 song covered by Knight in '75, is here roared to church by jilted Yvonne Fair.

Cherished project The Undisputed Truth followed him from Motown to Whitfield. From the former spell, I Saw You When You Met Her is brooding and expansive while You + Me = Love is sheer celebration, as is Willie Hutch's And All Hell Broke Loose, a great dance track. At Motown, the producer's use of B-listers yielded great hits like Edwin Starr's War. Same couldn't be said of his own label's also-rans like Mammatapee or Spyder Turner.



Bob Dylan in 1985, unearthing emotional cores.

Bob Dylan

★★★★

Springtime In New York: The Bootleg Series, Vol. 16 (1980-1985)

COLUMBIA/LEGACY. CD/DL/LP

Dylan raw and unadorned in the '80s.

BOB DYLAN
SPRINGTIME IN NEW YORK:
THE BOOTLEG SERIES
VOL. 16
1980-1985

DYLAN'S *BOOTLEG Series* consistently proves that he's his own best producer. Left to his devices with a batch of killer players, The Bard creates a rootsy rock'n'roll that equals punk for pure rawness. Roughly covering *Shot Of Love* to *Empire Burlesque*, this 5-CD set lets us revel in his creative process, its cut gems often shelved. Infamously, there's the electric take of Blind Willie McTell, about the evil that humans do. Then there's rehearsal covers like Dave Mason's hit We Just Disagree where he strips off pop sheen to unearth emotional cores. Dylan's lesser known It's Too Late is an angry story song about "secret things [that] might open some doors". Throughout, Dylan sings with a heft that later diminished for a time, meeting the intensity of the musicians' sound and fury, signifying music rarely matched.

Michael Simmon

A Love Supreme
Live In Seattle
John Coltrane

Deborah Feingold

John Coltrane

★★★★

A Love Supreme (Live In Seattle)

IMPULSE!. CD/DL/LP

Rare lost live recording of Trane's masterpiece.

Though universally regarded as his career-defining magnum opus, *A Love Supreme* was rarely performed in its entirety by its composer. Until now, the only known live recording of the work, which Coltrane described as a four-part hymn dedicated to God, occurred in July 1965 at France's Antibes Jazz Festival. The recent discovery, however, of a complete version taped in Seattle during October the same year offers a new perspective on one of jazz's most iconic LPs. What is immediately striking about this later version is the way Coltrane, using a seven-piece band that features a second saxophonist, Pharoah Sanders, radically reworks the music into long, amorphous rivers of sound driven by extended solos, rattling percussion, and Elvin Jones' thunderous drums. The music's suboptimal sound quality is only a minor drawback to a sonic experience whose raw intensity is both disquieting and uplifting.

Charles Waring

The Beau Brummels

★★★★

Turn Around

CHERRY RED. CD

Eight-CD box from 1964-69: five albums plus outtakes, demos and mono 45s mixes.

BEAU BRUMMELS

Running at 228 tracks, *Turn Around* is a fascinating career overview of this most underrated group. The Beau Brummels rushed out of the gate with two Top 20 hits in early 1965, Laugh Laugh and Just A Little, that represented the first creative US response to The Beatles. Even more remarkable was that they were released on a tiny San Francisco-based independent label, Autumn. Two LPs followed that year – including the excellent *Volume 2* – before Autumn went bust and the group recorded a patchy covers album for new label, Warner Bros. After this misstep, Warners bankrolled a sequence of terrific singles – Two Days Til Tomorrow, Lower Level, Lift Me – and two definitive LPs – *Triangle* (1967) and *Bradley's Barn* (1968) – that explored the possibilities of the album as an art form, with sophisticated songwriting, imaginative arrangements and a deep, spacious dive into Americana. Pretty much everything is here in all its glory, augmented by terrific extras such as Ron Elliot's 1966 demo of Candlestickmaker and a 1965 version of Sly Stone's Underdog.

Jon Savage

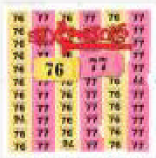
Sex Pistols

★★★★

76-77

UMC. CD/DL

Four CDs of 80 demos and outtakes from Pistols' start; eight previously unreleased.



Nine years ago, Universal unleashed a 35th anniversary edition of the Sex Pistols' epochal *Never Mind The Bollocks*, gilded with an unreleased rehearsal-room demo of Belsen Was A Gas from September 1977, the group's last-ever recording. Now they've gone the whole hog, with this vast set collecting every available Pistols off-cut. Much of the Spedding/Goodman/Mike Thorne/*Spunk* content will be familiar to fans, though not several newly unearthed outtakes and alternate mixes for *Bollocks* proper, including an instrumental Bodies and a different God Save The Queen. For those who missed it in 2012, there's also the historic June 11 demo of Bodies (here named 'Body'), with different lyrics and Sid Vicious on bass, which descends into a wonderful Troggs-style ding-dong between Paul Cook and Sid: "Get on with it, you tosser!", Fuck off!", "You cunt!", etc. For completists.

Pat Gilbert

Various

★★★

Eins Und Zwei Und Drei Und Vier – Deutsche Experimentelle Pop-Musik 1980-86

BUREAU B. CD/DL/LP

Comprehensive document of angsty post-punk innovation from the Bundesrepublik.

EINS UND ZWEI UND DREI UND VIER

Rejecting established Anglo-American rock'n'roll tropes, young West German artists of the early 1980s treated punk's tabula rasa as a licence for unabashed pop experiment. Youthfully invigorated yet shadowed by the Cold War, theirs was music of genre-melding escapism leavened with existential doubt – a dualistic hallmark of this eclectic, nervously energised 20-track survey. Typically, Palais Schaumburg's Wir Bauen Ein Neue Stadt marries mutant funk grooves and A Certain Ratio-like trumpets to deadpan vocals, while Die Fische's twitching So Verrückt practically defines the term 'angular pop' and the synthetic dub reggae of Dunkelziffer's Keine Python manages to sound at once both mellow and anxious. Elsewhere, influences are more overt – Conrad Schnitzler's Auf Dem Schwarzen Kanal is undiluted Kraftwerkian electropop, vocoder vocals and all, and Der Plan's Hey Baby Hop sounds like a Teutonic Tom Tom Club – but even here a palpable sense of all-bets-are-off liberation pervades.

David Sheppard

Various

★★★★

Cameroon Garage Funk

ANALOG AFRICA. CD/DL/LP

Unheralded West Africans take it to the church.

The music is great, but the real joy in the latest deep dive from Analog Africa lies in the backstory: with no access to studios in the 1970s, Yaoundé's wannabe James Browns would sneak into a church that owned a microphone and tape recorder, where the janitor would capture them between visits from the local clergy. But it's what's in these lo-fi grooves that counts, right? Well, there are hints of Jacques Dutronc (Monde Moderne, by Pierre Didy Tchakounte) and JB funk (Damas Swing Orchestra's Odylife; Los Camaroes' Esele Mulema Moam; Mayi Bo Ya? by Johnny Black Et Les Jokers), plus Afrobeat, Congolese rumba and Cuban mambo (Ma Wde Wa from the versatile Los Camaroes again). Pick of the bunch, though, is Jean-Pierre Djeukam's anthemic Africa Iyo, as frantic as a Fela Kuti long-player played at 45rpm. Utterly fabulous.

David Hutcheon

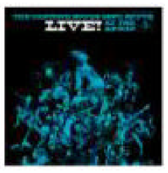
Various

★★★★★

The Daptone Super Soul Revue Live! At The Apollo

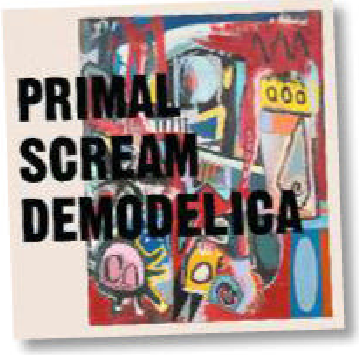
DAPTONE. DL/LP

It's showtime! Legendary 2014 live performance from the Daptone label.



For three nights in December 2014, New York's Daptone stable of acts took the 40-minute journey uptown to the Harlem Apollo and with tapes rolling, brought the house down. From openers Saun And Starr, formerly The Dapettes, Sharon Jones's backing singers and then owners of the label's biggest 45 Hot Shot, to the headliner Jones, the queen herself, it had them dancing in the Apollo's aisles. Today the LP stands as both celebration – marking the label's 20th anniversary – and memorial: sets by Naomi Shelton (her take-it-to-the-church testifying is one of the show's early highpoints), Charles Bradley and Jones sadly remind us of what we've lost. Bradley and Jones, of course, are phenomenal throughout. From screaming R&B ballad to cold sweat funk, they shine like true stars.

Lois Wilson



Primal Scream

★★★★

Demodelica

SONY. CD/DL/LP/MC

The pre-history of their 1991 classic *Screamadelica*.

With Bobby Gillespie dropping an autobiography, and various deluxe editions underway, the once headlong Scream are ready to reveal hidden depths, and these third album demoes are the crown jewels. The crux: how much of *Screamadelica*'s magic derived from chief producer Andrew Weatherall's touch? As Gillespie and guitarist Andrew Innes reveal in Jon Savage's linernotes, "Wevvers" was initially a provocateur – the catalyst whose futuristic methods in mixing Loaded liberated their songwriting from guitar/bass/drums tradition. Across four separate studio settings, we hear them thrashing out influence/sample-based ideas in often dense sound collages, which Weatherall (plus The Orb's Alex Paterson) would later unclutter, adding '90s psychedelic zing: Don't Fight It, Feel It growing from three interwoven keyboard parts, instrumental Inner Flight first sketched with a Gillespie vocal, and Shine Like Stars drifting on with tablas and gamelan bells, before Weatherall's edit. So much joy in the creation, it makes for wonderful listening.

Andrew Perry

Magic Roundabout

★★★

Up

THIRD MAN. DL/LP

Lost tape of '80s Manchester hopefuls finally released.

Earlier this year, Third Man released a 'lost' 7-inch 45 from an '80s Manchester band missing from history. While the track, Sneaky Feelin', sounded like a Sarah Records obscurity – tom-tom drums, jangling guitar, charmingly off-key female vocals – the group's 'discography' was so tiny (one track on a 1987 fanzine cassette compiled by Pulp's Mark Webber) you might think you were party to a spoof. Now, an album-length 1987 demo recording – previously in the possession of Pale Saints' Ian Masters – has been remastered and provenance takes a back seat to quality. Audibly influenced by The Velvet Underground and JAMC, the group are adept at two sounds, the rough-edged razor-pop of the Shop Assistants and the extemporised post-punk DIY of PragVec and the Mo-Dettes. The shift from melancholy Warhol eulogy Up to their discordo-nihilist 20-minute prayer to The Blue Aeroplanes' Gerard Langley is utterly wonderful and unique.

Andrew Male

Neil Young

★★★★

Carnegie Hall 1970

REPRISE. CD/DL/LP

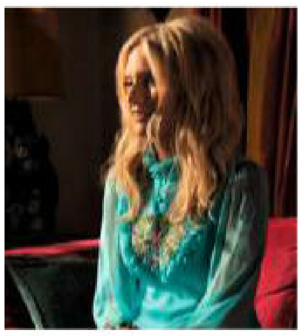
Twenty-three songs, live in NYC: Part 1 in a series of sanctioned Neil Young bootlegs.

If the *Archives* aren't enough, welcome to the *Official Bootleg Series*. December 4, three months after releasing *After The Gold Rush* and moving to Broken Arrow ranch, Neil Young flew east for a few solo gigs, including two sold-out shows at the famous 3,600-seat Carnegie Hall. Though not as chatty here as on some *Archive* live albums from the era, Young thanks everyone for waiting in line outside. This lengthy first show starts with an epic Down By The River, sounding much more tender, even wistful, solo. There are songs he did with Buffalo Springfield (Clancy, at the piano) and CSNY (gentle Helpless) and new ones (Old Man; Bad Fog; See The Sky). The only downside seems to be an audience with a dreadful sense of rhythm clapping along – Young actually stops playing Sugar Mountain twice. But an excellent selection of songs, beautifully performed. His mum Rassy, in the audience, must have been proud.

Sylvie Simmons

COMING NEXT MONTH…

Beatles, Stones, Replacements, Courtney Barnett, Nick Cave, Aimee Mann (pictured), Idles, Bruce Springsteen, Damon Albarn, David Bowie, Marissa Nadler, Theon Cross, Krauss & Plant, Boris, R.E.M., Nathaniel Rateliff and more.



REISSUES EXTRA

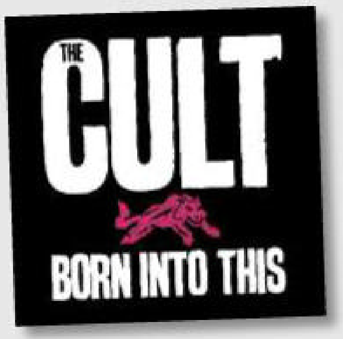
Buena Vista Social Club

★★★★★

Buena Vista Social Club

WORLD CIRCUIT/BMG. CD/DL/LP

Cuba's golden generation, doubled in length on its 25th anniversary, adds alt takes, 'repertoire suggestions' (Rubén González on Gualberto Ibarreto's El Diablo Suelto) and the odd gem (Vinceta), but most suggest the original edit was perfect. *JB*



The Cult

★★★

Born Into This

CHERRY RED. CD

The Cult's eighth album heralded a progressively strong 2007-15 trilogy, restoring a long-lost edge as the Astbury-Duffy axis found a sympathetic producer in Youth. Thrilling sounds, albeit not all songs live up to their titles: eg, War Pony Destroyer, a B-side now on bonus Disc 2. *KC*

PLEASE THE NATION
EYE

Eye Q

★★★

Please The Nation

NOW AGAIN. LP

Expanded 1976 LP by Cuthbert Maziwa's pre-independence Zimbabwean psych-rock group. Censored in Rhodesia (songs like Rock N Roll Freedom retitled Rock N Roll Soul) they have buzzy youth and exhilaration, but their chops weren't yet a match for role models Hendrix, Sabbath et al. *JB*

Grizzly Bear

★★★

Yellow House

WARP. LP

Brooklyn quartet's follow-up to their psych-folk debut began piling on the layers. Though still woozy and lo-fi in feel – more Espers than Animal Collective – its mosaic of instrumental and vocal timbres (best heard here on Knife), hinted at the opulent excess to come. Here in its 15th anniversary, 2-LP edition. *CP*

MARIANNE FAITHFULL
THE MONTREUX YEARS

Marianne Faithfull

★★★★

The Montreux Years

BMG. CD/DL/LP

Double LP drawn from five performances over 15 years. Great stage banter catches the contradictions in this primmest of hedonists ("you've all been very good, I must say") while still sounding wild and unpredictable. Highlights: spine-tingling Broken English (2009), Guilt, and Cohen's Tower Of Song (both 1999). *JB*

NICK LOWE
The Convincer

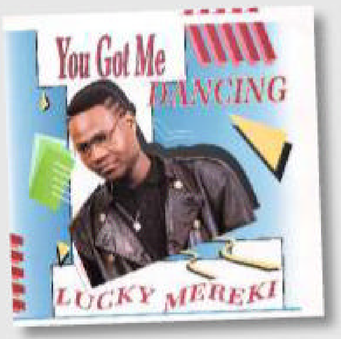
Nick Lowe

★★★★

The Convincer

YEP ROC. LP

The third in Lowe's comeback trilogy cast him as an elder statesman, so best not dwell on what its 20th anniversary makes him, but its beautifully twangsome, mordent reflections on midlife (Matt Monroe-ish Only A Fool Breaks His Own Heart) and ever-present wit remain as cool the album's cover. *JB*



Lucky Mereki

★★★

You Got Me Dancing

RE:WARM. DL/LP

First international release for the South African multi-instrumentalist's 1991 set of buoyant Kwaito house, hip-hop, soul and funk to mark the end of apartheid. Synthesized strings and squeaky evocations to party sound 'of their time', but in a moment of intoxicating optimism and freedom. *JB*

MUSIK MUSIC MUSIQUE 2.0

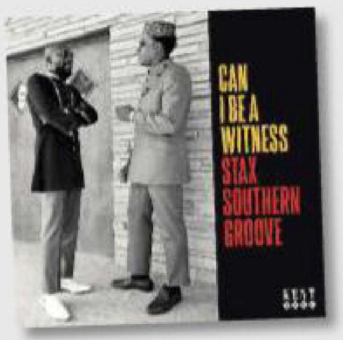
Various

★★★

Musik Music Musique 2.0

CHERRY RED. CD/DL

Vol 2 of this synth-pop history covers 1981, starting with Heaven 17's epochal (We Don't Need This) Fascist Groove Thang. Fifty tracks could hardly improve on it, but there's plenty of high-value frigid dystopia by Devo, OMD, Japan and deeper cuts such as Virna Lindt's Anglo-Swedish novelty Young And Hip. *JB*



Various

★★★★

Can I Be A Witness

ACE. CD/DL

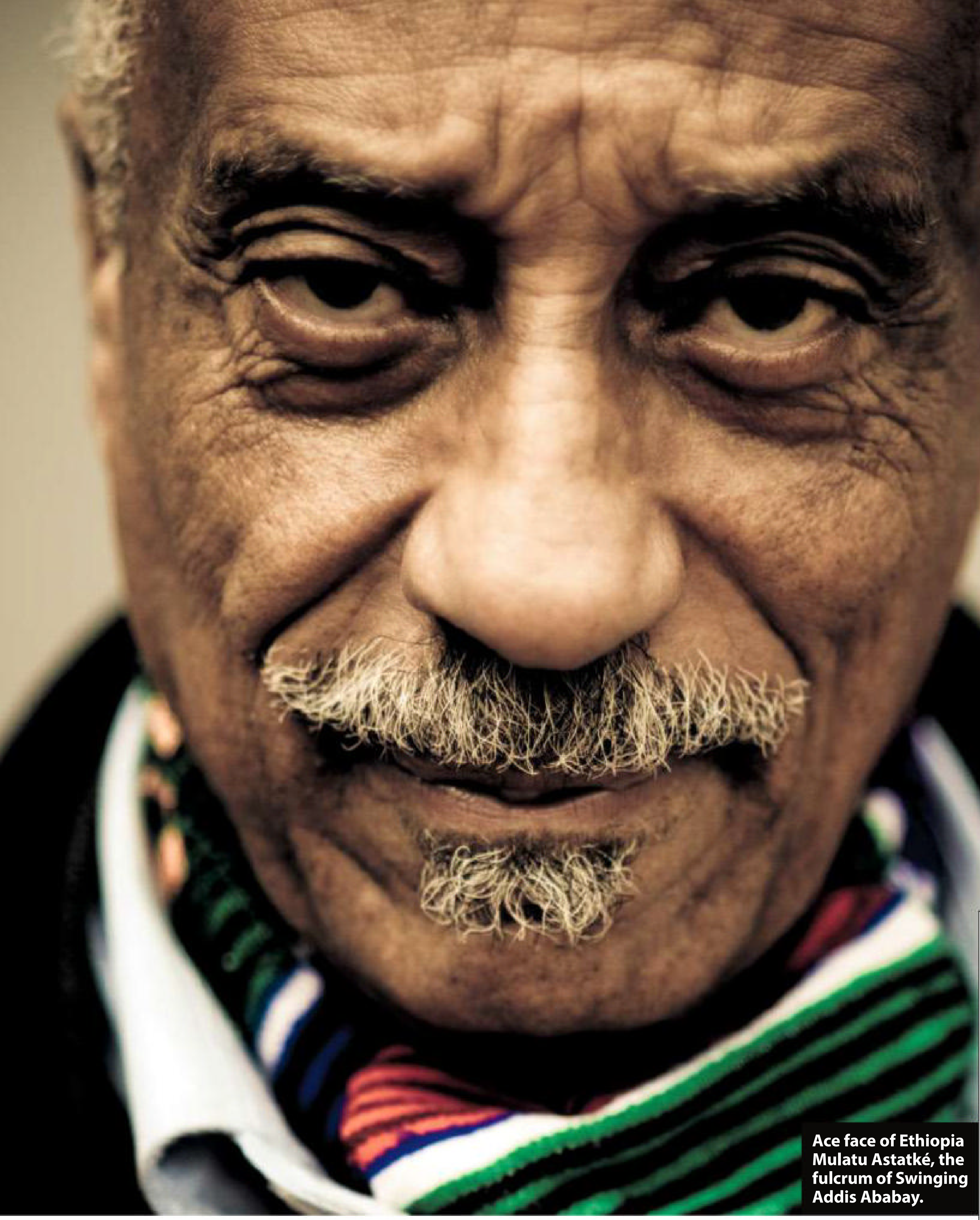
Despite a *Stax Southern Groove* subtitle, this 20 track must-have set for soul fans finds the label taking on Detroit charts (Jeanne & The Darlings), light disco (Mel And Tim) and Passing Through, a remarkably expansive Frederick Knight track. Much '70s soul-funk too with The Soul Children, Rance Allen, Veda Brown, Shack etc. *GB*

RATINGS & FORMATS

Your guide to the month's best music is now even more definitive with our handy format guide.

CD COMPACT DISC DL DOWNLOAD ST STREAMING LP VINYL
MC CASSETTE DVD DIGITAL VERSATILE DISC C IN CINEMAS BR BLU-RAY

★★★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★	★	☆
MOJO CLASSIC	EXCELLENT	GOOD	DISAPPOINTING	BEST AVOIDED	DEPLORABLE



Ace face of Ethiopia Mulatu Astatké, the fulcrum of Swinging Addis Ababay.

Ethiopian pop

Dispatches from the heart of swinging Addis Ababa. By **David Hutcheon.**

THE CORONATION of Haile Selassie (AKA Ras Tafari Makonnen) as Emperor of Ethiopia in 1930 didn't just inspire a religion in Jamaica but also, in his attempts to modernise Abyssinia, gave rise to one the most covetable musical strains East Africa has ever produced, a hybrid reminiscent of soul, jazz, folk and blues that, thanks to its spacey pentatonic scales and lopsided rhythms, is instantly familiar yet utterly unique.

Selassie loved brass bands and orchestras, ensuring almost every government and cultural institution had one and competed for the best musicians. As global communication improved, the army and police bands would pick up on the latest James Brown and Otis Redding records, and members would supplement their incomes playing clubs behind the country's most popular vocalists. The golden age of swinging Addis Ababa was short lived, however: a coup in 1974 put in power a hardline Marxist government, the Derg, that took a dim view of nightclubs, pop music and the arts. Ethiopia's cultural life never quite closed down, of course, but it was closed off from the world, with Aster Aweke one of only a few to be heard outside her homeland in the cassette era that followed.

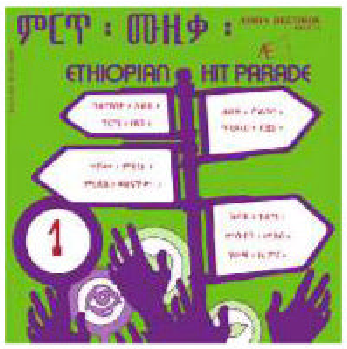
In 1997, French producer Francis Falceto started compiling the game-changing *Éthiopiques* CD series, which ran to 30 volumes and triggered a surge in interest in Ethiopian musicians past and present. Though prices for original vinyl can be prohibitive, the music produced in the decade between 1969 and 1978 is easy to collect if you like pristine reissues, and you don't need to be a cratedigger to get your hands on the best stuff. Only around 500 singles were released, mostly in picture sleeves, and just 30 or so long-players, several of which are now available on labels such as Heavenly Sweetness or Mississippi/Change.

Knowing where to start can be daunting – well, can you read Amharic? – but you won't go wrong with these 10 albums.

> **"Reminiscent of soul, jazz, folk and blues, it's familiar yet utterly unique."**

CAST YOUR VOTES...

This month you chose your Top 10 Ethiopian pop LPs. Next month we want your Herbie Hancock Top 10. Send selections via Twitter, Facebook, Instagram or e-mail to mojo@bauermedia.co.uk with the subject 'How To Buy Herbie Hancock' and we'll print the best comments.

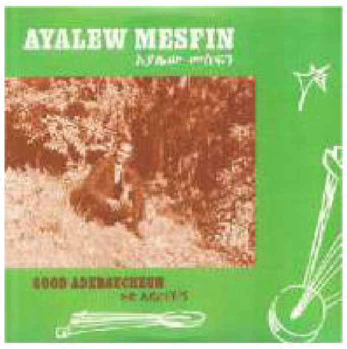


10 Various
Ethiopian Hit Parade

AMHA, 1972

You say: "My first port of call when I crave a near perfect distillation of Ethiopia's musical riches." Jamie Renton, via Facebook

The entry-level VFM choice could have been Union Square's 2-CD *The Very Best Of Éthiopiques* (or Heavenly Sweetness's *Heavenly Éthiopiques* for vinyl heads), but Amha Eshete's ground-breaking indie label got there first and deserves the credit. The first of five volumes (though the only one to have been reissued), it collects a dozen singles from 1969-71, including Mulatu Astatké's genre-defining Yekermo Saw and Seifu Yohannes's Tezeta, a tune that almost every act out of Addis Ababa has had a crack at. Find a copy of the Mulatu In London EP on Amha going for pennies at a car-boot sale and you may be able to retire on the profit.



4 Ayaléw Mèsfin
Good Aderegechegn

NOW-AGAIN, 2020

You say: "Apparently, he wrote his first songs at gunpoint. Responds very well to pressure." Basil Anderson, via Facebook

Most of his output slipped through the *Éthiopiques* net, so Mèsfin must be second-rate, right? Hang your head in shame. Working with the Black Lion Band, the singer released approximately 20 singles between 1973, when he was 18, and 1977, packing them with fuzz guitar, handclaps, organ and horns – giving him a sound worthy of the best hard-working US soul outfits. One take, no overdubs. In collaboration with Mèsfin, Now-Again have simulated five LPs he might conceivably have issued, but start here: the garage-punk-funk of Hasabe (My Worries) – written in an attempt to simultaneously emulate both James Brown and Jimi Hendrix – will reel you in.

Getty, Alamy

The Greatest Hits of Bezunesh Bekele

9 Bezunesh Bekele
The Greatest Hits Of Bezunesh Bekele

NAHOM, 2012

You say: "The first lady of Ethiopian song, no question." Brian Smyth, via Facebook

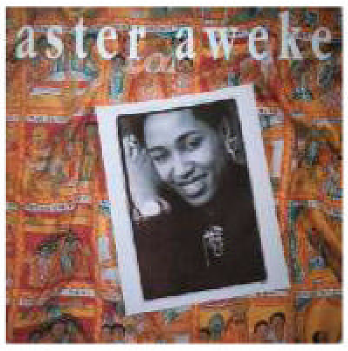
If there is a complaint to be made about the *Éthiopiques* series, it is that few women get their due. Even if the scene was overwhelmingly male – and it undeniably was – there's a strong case for Bekele being worthy of a standalone CD. Fronting the Imperial Body Guard Band in 1972-74, she released nine cracking hook-laden singles for Philips, heavy on rhythm and horns, and a further two in 1977 with The Dahlak Band (both groups also backed Mahmoud Ahmed). Though 'Bezuye' died in 1990 and never saw the revival in modern Ethiopian music, there's some great footage on YouTube that will also teach you how do a passable Ethiopian shoulder dance.

8 Mulatu Astatké/The Heliocentrics
Inspiration Information

STRUT, 2009

You say: "Studied in London at the same time as Fela Kuti – two world giants of composition." John Barrett, via Facebook

No one has bounced back from Ethiopia's dark ages like Astatké. With a buzz building about the *Éthiopiques* series, Jim Jarmusch used three Astatké tracks on the soundtrack to his 2005 film Broken Flowers. The dam burst. After a day's rehearsal with The Heliocentrics resulted in a wild London date in 2008, the team rushed to the studio with new ideas, sketches and traditional tunes to record Mulatu's best work in 35 years. There's no sense of him coasting as he nears 80, however: his recent releases, with Black Jesus Experience, are the most avant-garde of his career.



7 Aster Aweke
Aster

TRIPLE EARTH, 1989

You say: "One of the most compelling singer/writer/performers I've ever come across." Iain Scott, via Facebook

Having appeared on Hailu Mergia's *Tche Belew* as a teenager, Aster Aweke recorded a string of smash-hit cassettes, bringing her to the wider attention of the outside world by the time she resettled in America in 1981. Her terrific international debut was released on a British indie, but *Aster* is so accomplished that it was quickly picked up by Columbia in the States. Though its keyboard-based sound makes the album very much of its time, when the band give way to solo harp, the feeling in Aweke's voice pours through. Follow-up *Kabu* is not too shabby either, but this is a modern soul set worthy of a place on shelf or playlist next to Anita Baker or Sade.

GETATCHEW MEKURIA

6 Gétatchèw Mèkurya
Gétatchèw Mèkurya And His Saxophone (also on *Éthiopiques 14*)

PHILIPS, 1972

You say: "Would have been a giant of the jazz world in any other circumstances." Jon Hollis, via Facebook

Though he claimed not to know Ornette Coleman, the nabob of free jazz and "the Negus of Ethiopian sax" had similar souls. Mèkurya's career followed a familiar path – the Addis Municipality Band, the Haile Selassie Theatre band, the Police Orchestra – but by his mid-thirties he was bringing the traditions of Ethiopian warriors to jazz, playing masenqo (a single-stringed lute) licks on his tenor, taking the stage in animal skins and lion's mane. Untamed by the Derg, on his final recordings and tours he was backed by Dutch punks The Ex.

éthiopiques
Ethiopia Song
21
Emahoy Tsegue-Maryam Guebrou
PIANO 1010

5 Emahoy Tsegué-Maryam Guèbrou
Ethiopia Song (*Éthiopiques 21*)

BUDA, 2006

You say: "An 80-year-old pianist nun? Pretty cool." Peter Culshaw, via Facebook

Sixteen solo piano tunes, beautifully played and occupying a midpoint between classical and folk, but where to start on Guèbrou's life? The first five tracks come from a German 10-inch released at Haile Selassie's request; royalties always go to charities; she studied music in Switzerland from the age of six; she was a PoW in the second war with Mussolini's Italy in 1936; fluent in nine languages, she was the first female employee of the Ethiopian civil service. She still plays piano in the Ethiopian convent in Jerusalem where she has lived for 37 years. She will be 98 in December. And you're wondering whether or not to buy this collection?

HAILU MERGIA

3 Hailu Mergia And The Walias
Tche Belew

KAIFA, 1977

You say: "My first love, yet to be bettered." Berry Andrews, via Facebook

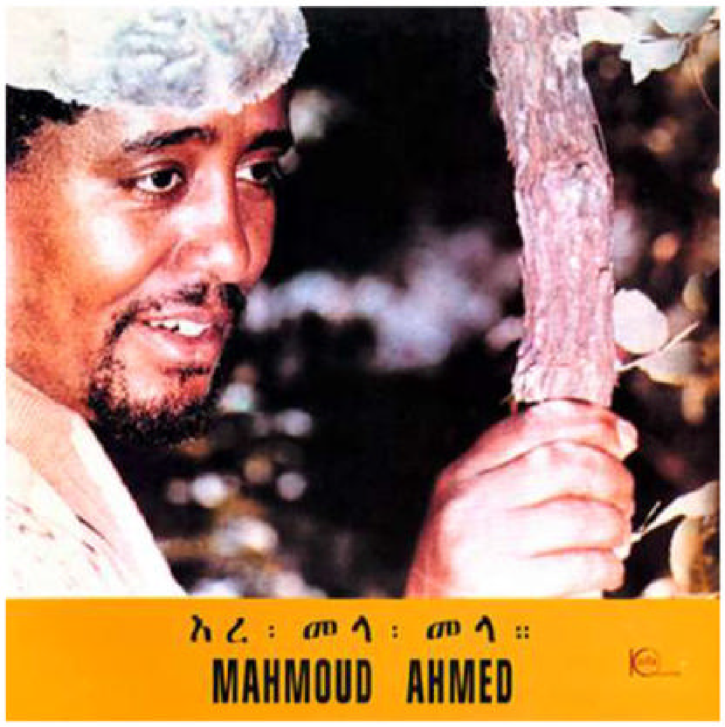
By night, the house band at the Addis Hilton; by day, in the studio backing Tlahoun Gèssèssè, Mahmoud Ahmed or Alemayehu Eshété – Walias were a crack outfit by any standard. They also recorded several albums of their own, with the pick of those currently available (on Awesome Tapes From Africa) this cooking soul session (bandleader and organist Mergia is a huge M.G.'s fan, and it shows). The band split after a US tour, with Mergia still supporting himself as a Washington DC taxi driver even though new albums, reissues, global tours and festival dates have made him a bankable 21st century star. He keeps a keyboard in the boot in case inspiration strikes.

2 Mulatu Astatké
Yekatit – Ethio Jazz (also *Éthiopiques 4*)

AMHA, 1974

"A mysterious, eerie portal into a whole other world ready to be explored." Mark Raison, via Twitter

If Ethiopia ever had a Mod scene, Astatké was its ace face. He'd studied in London and New York (rather than learn his craft in a military band), befriending Ronnie Scott, the Coltranes et al (recording a lost album with Alice Coltrane), and releasing two volumes of *Afro-Latin Soul*. Back home, working as an arranger, he was the fulcrum of Swinging Addis (even hosting Duke Ellington in 1973). Though you won't be disappointed if you buy *Mulatu Of Ethiopia* instead, this is the pick of the two mid-'70s long-players he recorded while trying to convince his homeland that jazz had African roots. Pulsating, slinky, woozy and funky as…



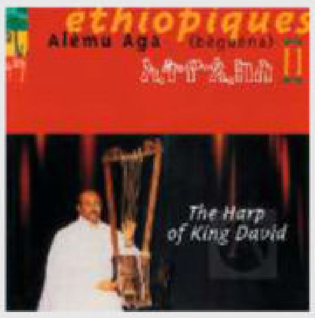
1 Mahmoud Ahmed
Erè Mèla Mèla (also on *Éthiopiques 7*)

KAIFA, 1975

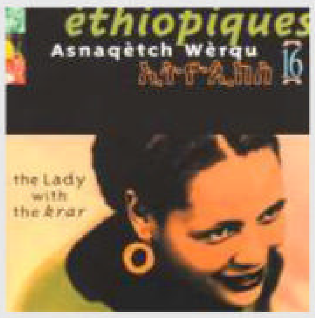
You say: "Great mix of hypnotic African scales and vocal tones but with hints of American jazz and R&B… and some rockin' fuzz guitar." Jo Kendall, via Twitter

A decade into his singing career, Ahmed hit his stride around 1972, releasing a string of singles that would be collected on three LPs, (the first pair now most easily tracked down as *Éthiopiques 6* and *19*). The third, 1975's *Erè Mèla Mèla*, is the crowning glory of Swinging Addis, mesmeric, snaking rhythms (courtesy of the Ibex Band) backing a formidable vibrato that has grit and smoothness, pain and yearning in equal measure. Notably, it had a life post-Live Aid, when it became the first modern Ethiopian album to be released in Europe (on Crammed Discs). As a postscript to the golden age, Mahmoud's next LP, 1978's *Jeguol Naw Betwa*, would be the last piece of vinyl released in Ethiopia as the regime clamped down.

NOW DIG THIS



Yes, Alèmayèhu Eshèté, Tlahoun Gèssèssè, Girma Bèyènè and several more all could have figured in the Top 10, and Heavenly Sweetness's box sets of repro singles are lovely. Make those your next stops if you're hooked. If you want to dig into the roots, *Éthiopiques 11 – The Harp Of King David*, by Alèmu Aga, and Asnaqètch Wèrqu's *Éthiopiques 16 – The Lady With The Krar* are essential to understanding the endemic folk-funk that underpins the pop. Then it's on to the Ethiopian griots, the Azmari. And funkiness never respects borders: the sounds of Somalia, Sudan and Eritrea also deserve exploration.



Primula Scream! Having a beach party at Centre Point in 1997, The Gentle People (from left) Dougee Dimensional, Honeymink, Laurie Lemans and Valentine Carnelian.

David Lewis

Easy riders

This month's swinging slept-on: when lounge met ambient on the Sandoz space cruiser.

The Gentle People

Soundtracks For Living

REPHLEX, 1997

THE REMIXES of Richard 'Aphex Twin' James could be atomising things, as he dynamited songs to remake them in his own image. But when he took on Journey, 1995's galactic debut by The Gentle People, he seemed in awe. He built carefully on the vaporous original, adding extra dimensions to its Latin trance-into-infinity. Besotted, James told Rephlex Records artist P.P. Roy that the group "give me all the love I need."

The group who made unsmiling RD James glow with love power had roots in a shared flat off Brixton's Acre Lane, and a social circle that included DJs The Karminsky Experience, in 1991. Charity shops and carboot sales were full of the cast-off records, clothes and *objets d'art* of the '60s and '70s. This flotsam of a lost age of style and glamour would find new life on London's easy listening scene. After throwing house parties, The Gentle People would evolve into a recording and performance entity. Taking their name from an aquarian go-go tune in Russ Meyer's cult 1970 satire Beyond The Valley Of The Dolls, the members took parallel identities. Californian Douglas Stoddard was Dougee Dimensional, Londoner Sarah Simonon was Honeymink (after the gas cooker), Normandy-born Laurence (surname withheld) was Laurie Lemans and, joining in 1992, programmer/producer Jeremy Leahy – who'd spent early years in South Africa – was Valentine Carnelian.

"I have always claimed to be an alien and I stand by that!" says Honeymink today. "DD and I definitely feel we came from Gentle World and are only temporarily here. I remember thinking, Laurie's so perfect – a mini Brigitte Bardot. She brought a deeper philosophical angle and an excellent creative aesthetic. And Jer/Val was so hilarious and off the wall we knew he was right… he was clever and so talented."

Their fashion-inverting in-house sound-tracks included such easy groovers as Norrie Paramor And His Orchestra's *Lovers In Latin*, The Free Design's *You Could Be Born Again* and the OST for Bedazzled. Also playing were contemporary ambient excursions: The Orb's *Adventures Beyond The Ultraworld*, The KLF's *Chill Out* and Bassomatic's *Set The Controls For The Heart Of The Bass*.

A demo reached Aphex's Rephlex Records – via Gentle designer/Aphex housemate Johnie Clayton and party-throwing pal Nahila – and Journey was released on the label in summer 1995. Excited coverage in the pop media often took in the wider easy listening revival, with talk of what The Gentle People called 'The Primula Aesthetic'.

"When we talked about that Primula Aesthetic, we wanted it to be synthetic cheese," says Dougee. "We knew people were going to perceive easy listening as a cheeseball thing, which is great if you want to, but we also knew we could do something really tasteful and cutting edge that could be appreciated on a different level."

After early-'96's blissed-out Emotion Heater EP, and interest from labels like Echo, Warners and Sony, cash from Japan's Flavour Of Sound imprint enabled work on *Soundtracks For Living* to continue that summer. They recorded at Leahy's Gentle Studio, in a bedroom in his flat on Lower Marsh Street, Waterloo. There were interruptions by noisy neighbours and trains, while Dougee, Honeymink and Laurie recorded their vocals in a wardrobe using a microphone cover made out of a coathanger and tights. "When we sang through the pantyhose on the mike we called it, Singing Through The Gusset," notes Dougee, who says voice tuition came from Lorraine Bowen, AKA The Crumble Lady off Britain's Got Talent.

Carefully selected samples, instrumentation and vocals were sifted and arranged using Cubase, an Akai sampler, and a Mac. "It was nuts," says Dougee. "Valentine and I spent a lot of time on the production during the daytime and the ladies, who were holding down full-time jobs, would come a little later. We did it all collectively, but essentially Valentine was the mastermind who could bring it all into fruition."

CREDITS

Tracks: Intro / The Soundtrack Of Life / Journey / World Of Love / Laurie's Theme / Emotion Heater / Dream / Travel Bug / Le Tunnel De L'Amour / Stay / A Close Encounter / Tiki Mix / Relaxation Central / Journey (Reprise) / Outro

Personnel: Dougee Dimensional, Honeymink, Laurie Lemans, Valentine Carnelian, Lady Pleiades (additional vocals), Harmony Angel (additional vocals), Charlie ("sexy vocal"), Paul Hookham (brushwork).

Producers: The Gentle People

Outfits: Roja Von Galaxy

Released: January 1997

Recorded: Gentle Studios, London; ZKT Sheffield (editing/ digital makeover)

Chart peak: n/a

Available: Rephlex CD and LP

Transcending its limited circumstances, *Soundtracks For Living* wove phantom brass, strings and percussion into an electronic balm. The first phase has a hyperreal pop- lounge aspect, the cocktail-hour title track stranding The Swingle Singers on Space Station V from Kubrick's 2001. In the second chapter this cedes to cosmic out-of-body-experiences like Relaxation Central, a celestial cascade of harps, strings and Theremin. The deep-brain travelogue also lands in the South Seas, on the wrong side of the Iron Curtain and over at Liberace's place. Listening, it's curious to reflect that Honeymink's sibling is Clash bassist Paul Simonon. She says that while "our music is not his cup of tea at all" he is always a "great, super- supportive" brother.

The release was marked by a Peel Session at Abbey Road in April 1997 and live shows in Japan. Later activities involved shows – with artificial leather mascot, the Nauga – in Berlin, St Petersburg and Barcelona, and 1999's second album *Simply Faboo*. Transmissions from GentleWorld have continued, with Dougee, Honeymink and Laurie Lemans last being heard on Ursula 1000's *Esoterique* in 2019. Sadly, Leahy, who continued to work in library music, passed away in July. "He was a perfectionist, making sure that we got the best take and the best mix possible," says Dougee of Leahy's work on *Soundtracks For Living*. "We always wanted to sound very expensive, and if you had actually seen where we recorded it, you'd be like, 'Oh my God, how did you do this?' Which goes to show you how good a producer he was."

While a vinyl reissue of the LP is mooted, Honeymink wonders if The Gentle People's story has now ended.

"I don't know if we'd do anything again," she says. "The purest form of us is no longer, now Jeremy has gone."

Ian Harrison

the Gentle People

"The Gentle People give me all the love I need."

RICHARD D JAMES

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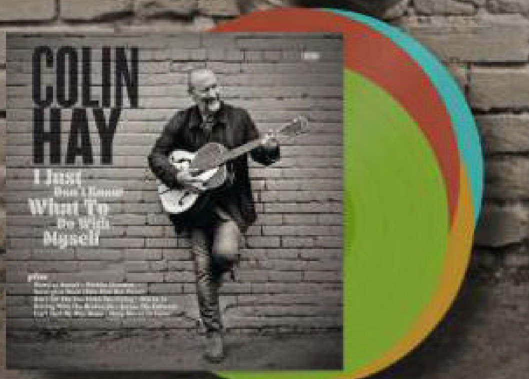

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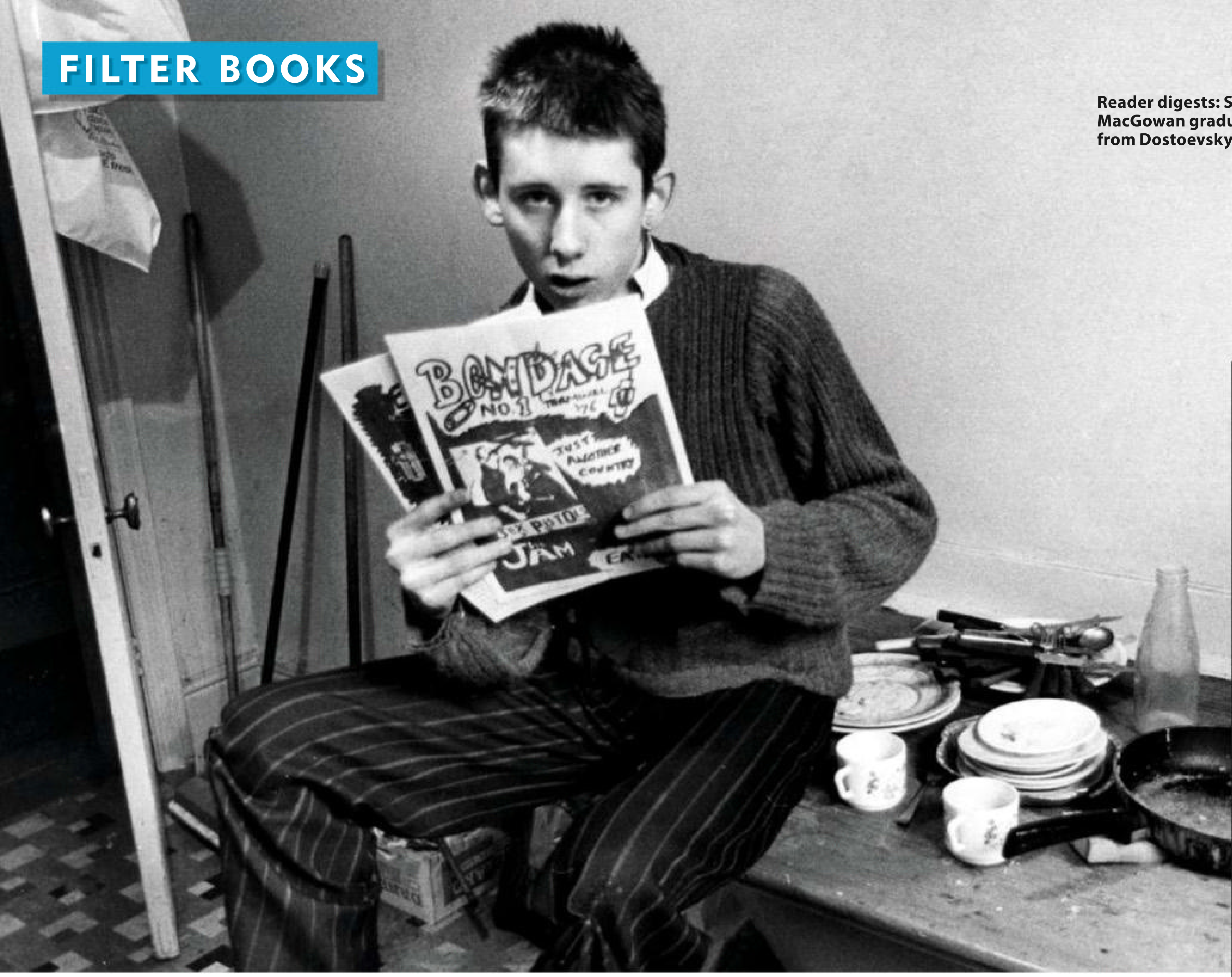


Reader digests: Shane MacGowan graduates from Dostoevsky.

Getty

Beyond good and evil

Great Irish poet, irresponsible addict, scared little boy and more in this definitive portrait of the former Pogue. By **Andrew Male**.

A Furious Devotion: The Authorised Story Of Shane MacGowan

★★★★

Richard Balls

OMNIBUS PRESS. £20

RICHARD BALLS first met Shane MacGowan while working on Be Stiff, his 2014 biography of Stiff Records, when a meeting facilitated by MacGowan's friend, the actor Paul Ronan, allowed Balls entry into the close inner circle of MacGowan's family and friends.

As was recently documented in Julian Temple's MacGowan documentary, Crock Of Gold, this former Pogue and great Irish writer is a complicated interviewee: irascible, contrary, with a deep loathing for discussing himself and his work. Assisted by MacGowan's family and friends, Balls' approach is akin to that of a nature documentary, hanging out at his subject's flat and waiting for the right time when stories about childhood, The Pogues and his philosophy of the world would start to flow.

Such an approach – intimate, cooperative, conciliatory – might suggest a rose-tinted hagiography, but from our first contemporary meeting with MacGowan, leaving a private doctor in Belgravia, "Tall, gangling… a gigantic trail of snot dangling from his nose", we know something different is about to unfold.

Balls' intention is to unravel the myths of MacGowan's life – this Irishman raised just outside Tunbridge Wells and educated at Westminster School – while simultaneously acknowledging that certain life puzzles will remain unresolved. Yet the book's strength is that he lets MacGowan speak, and speak on, perfectly capturing the lyrical, romantic rhythms beneath that rasped whisper.

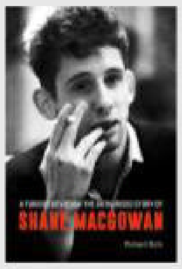
The stories of MacGowan's childhood precociousness (reading Dostoevsky aged 10, writing like him aged 11) have always been in doubt, but Balls tracked down his old English teacher, the late Tom Simpson, who confirmed that Shane was a young literary genius. Gradually, we see that child prodigy transformed, soaking up the influences of Irish Catholicism, rock'n'roll, the seemingly bucolic life lived by his aunties and uncles in Tipperary, and the more damaging effects of his parents' move to London's Barbican in 1971.

Utilising everything from Woodbines to LSD, Robert Crumb cartoons and the outsider sounds of the MC5 and The Stooges, Shane MacGowan becomes Shane O'Hooligan, the school prankster, teenage drug dealer and punk rocker.

If the next stage of the story, from punk rock to The Pogues, might be the most familiar, it is also the most visceral and unreliable, with MacGowan's increasing drug use lending a phantasmagoric disquiet to proceedings. Balls approaches it with fastidious detail, contrasting stories played off against each other and, importantly, bringing in female voices such as his ex-girlfriends Merrill Heatley and Mary Buxton, former landlady Kathy MacMillan, Sinéad O'Connor and previous biographer Ann Scanlon. The result is a forensic, often blackly comic vision of chaos and celebration in ever decreasing circles of hell, Balls meticulously noting MacGowan's fellow travellers who die of drugs and drink along the way.

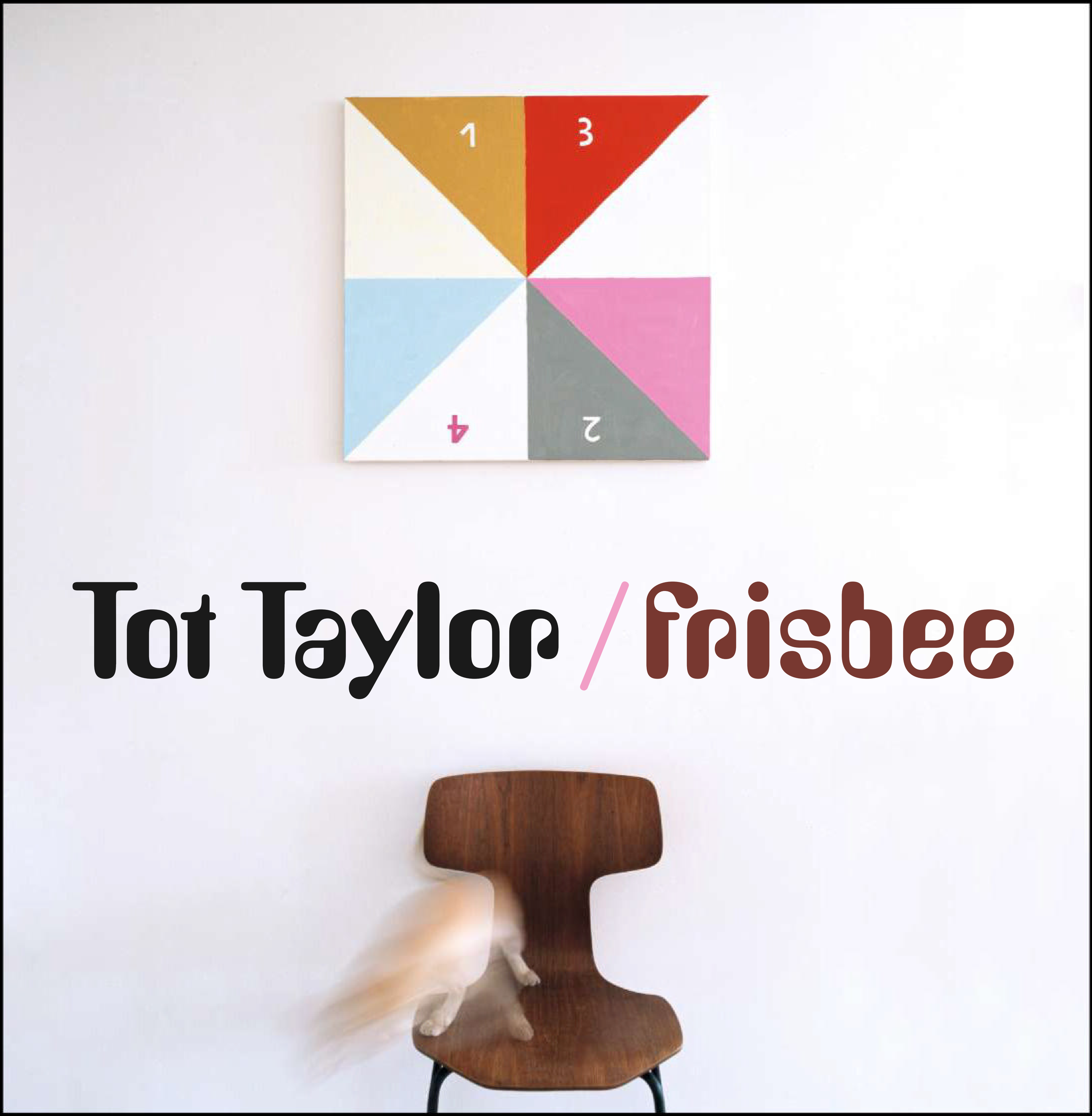
Ultimately, we arrive back in MacGowan's flat, TV blaring, the portrait as close to finished as it ever could be, of a man who would rather do anything than sit with himself; a man, an addict who, in the chilling words of O'Connor "has no empathy, feels nothing", yet is also, to quote Scanlon, "a divine being". It is to Balls' credit that both incarnations are brought to life vividly in his writing.

> "Chaos and celebration in ever-decreasing circles of hell."



WHAT WE'VE LEARNT

- One of Shane MacGowan's classmates at the prestigious Westminster School was Thomas Morgan Robertson AKA British electronic musician and future '80s pop star Thomas Dolby.
- Recording sessions for MacGowan's first album with the Popes were so drug-fuelled that tapes were nightly delivered to Cult and Manics producer Steve Brown who gave them a stadium polish. "The band were so out of it no one even noticed."
- Whilst lodging with Kathy MacMillan, MacGowan decided to drop 20 tabs of acid and listen to Puccini's Madam Butterfly. He got so high that he started to eat a vinyl copy of The Beach Boys' *Greatest Hits* thinking "the future of the world" depended on it.



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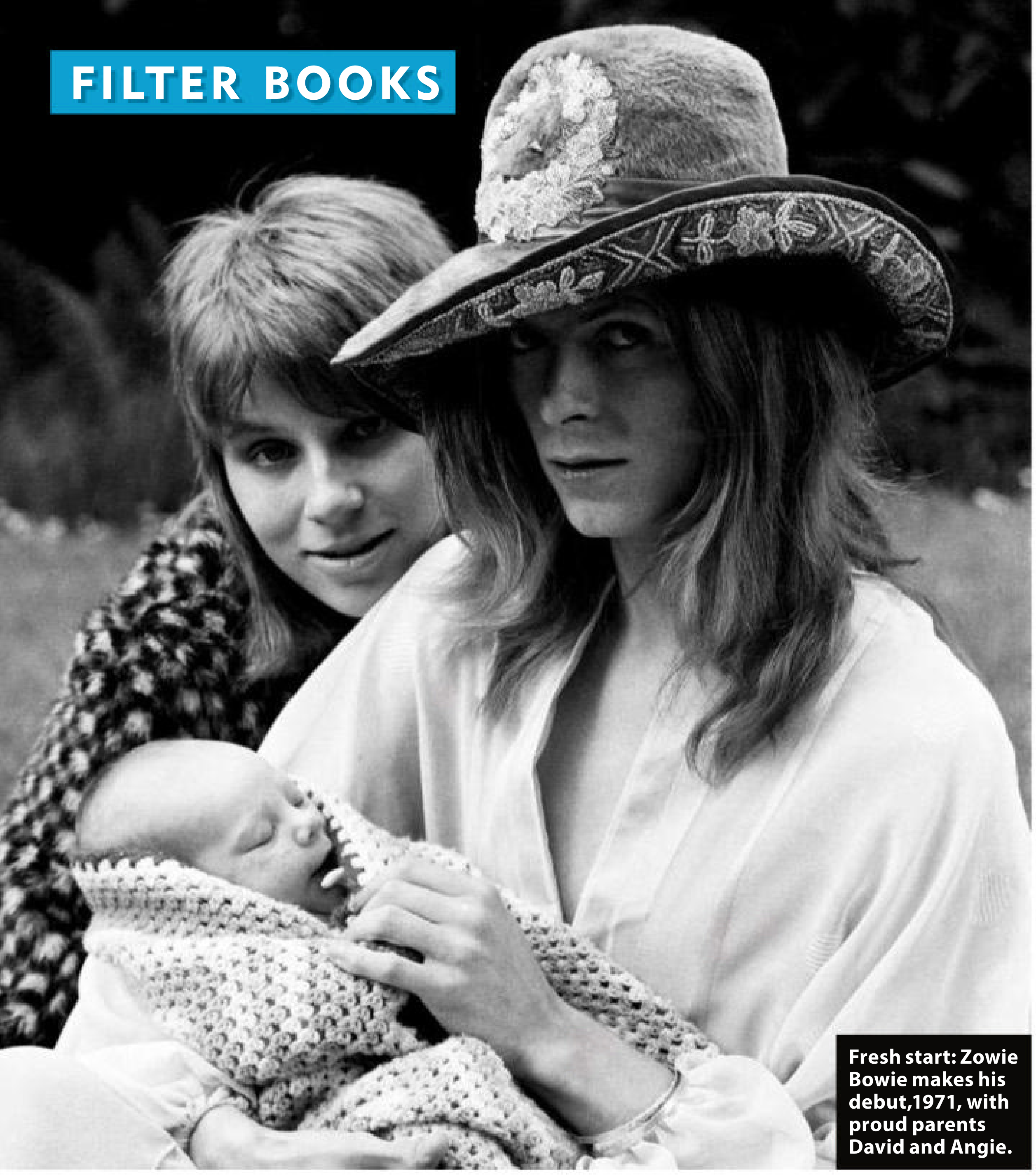
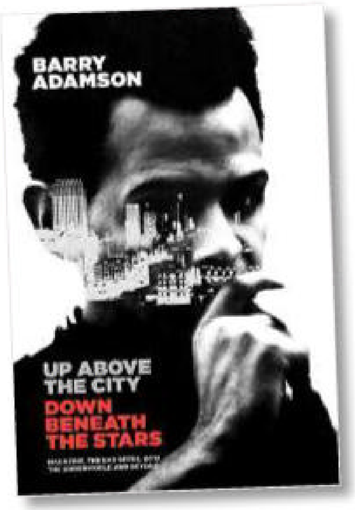


Fresh start: Zowie Bowie makes his debut,1971, with proud parents David and Angie.



Up Above The City, Down Beneath The Stars

★★★★

Barry Adamson

OMNIBUS PRESS. £20

Deeply personal memoir from multi-talented bassist and composer.

If Barry Adamson was simply known for his ground-breaking work as a founder member of Magazine, he would have had more than enough material for an autobiography. Yet he is also able to draw here on his time playing bass for Pete Shelley and for Iggy Pop, standing in for Tracey Pew in The Birthday Party and being a key member of The Bad Seeds during their first four albums. It's such a rich seam that this book finishes in the late '80s, just before the start of his varied career as a solo artist and movie soundtrack composer. To those achievements, he can add the writing of a compellingly honest and evocative memoir, giving equal weight to childhood experiences alongside subsequent band tensions and rivalries, all illuminated along the way by pin-sharp pop culture references. A nuanced and ultimately very positive meditation on illness, love, race, identity, loss, football, substance abuse and the transformative power of great music.

Max Décharné

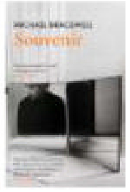
Souvenir

★★★★

Michael Bracewell

WHITE RABBIT. £14.99

Early-'80s London through the eyes of a British novelist and pop culture essayist.



At first it reads like a series of postcards from the past as Bracewell uses photos, records and images from old bedsit walls to recall his life in the capital, as the dusty late-'70s modernism gradually gives way to a new digital pop age. He is a lyrical, rhapsodic writer, but his style has always resisted the bare mechanics of standard biography or history. Here, freed from such concerns, he loses himself in rich, evocative reveries on everything from the Walkman and PiL's *Metal Box* ("a post-industrial Winterreise… from a place of abandoned allotments and overhead cables") to the "desperate tiredness" of his parents' own suburban home. Part eulogy, part elegy, Bracewell's blurred hallucinatory memoir seems to have no grand purpose other than to transport and the reader has no option but to give in to its powerful, hypnotic prose and imagine themselves as a time traveller or ghost, adrift in a vanished London poised somewhere between post-war despondency and futuristic optimism.

Andrew Male

Dead Moon: Off The Grid

★★★★

Erin Yanke And Eric Isaacson

VENTIL VERLAG. £45

Garage rock hero Fred Cole remembered.

A living counter-argument to Lester Bangs' fictional speculation on The Count Five's wretched career had they not vanished after Psychotic Reaction, Fred Cole – author of *Nuggets* cornerstone You Must Be A Witch with The Lollipop Shoppe – really did keep going, spewing forth dozens of brilliant, urgent songs with inspirational adherence to rock'n'roll's primitivist urges. His passage from pre-Shoppe combo The Weeds, through punk-era The Rats and his 20-year majesty in Dead Moon, on to his passing in 2017, is lovingly chronicled according to his own home-spun, fiery spirit. Initially, dodgy contracts left him and wife Toody struggling to raise their kids in Clackamas, Oregon, but from 1987 to 2006 Dead Moon survived as a feverish cult, with Toody on bass and drummer Andrew Loomis, their marathon shows measured by how long it took a candle to burn down atop a Jack Daniel's bottle. This first non-US print of Off The Grid wonderfully celebrates Cole's DIY individualism. A full discography is included.

Andrew Perry

Unrequited Infatuations: A Memoir

★★★★★

Stevie Van Zandt

WHITE RABBIT. £20

E Street Band guitarist and Sopranos actor tells all.

The night Steve Van Zandt and Bruce Springsteen met Clarence Clemons; Springsteen being pursued by a randy Janis Joplin; Little Richard marrying Van Zandt and fiancée Maureen while guest Percy Sledge sings When A Man Loves A Woman – Unrequited Infatuations packs in some beautifully written set-pieces, but it is also funny, deeply ruminative and frank. A serial ideas man driven by intense passions both musical and political, the author knows "true bliss is a perfect drum fill", reveals that his bandana was influenced by Zorro, and explains why he was wrong about Springsteen's Dancing In The Dark. He's similarly great on his time playing Silvio Dante in The Sopranos (writer David Chase initially had him down to play Tony Soprano), and as Frank Tagliano in the Norway-set mobster-in-hiding romp Lilyhammer, which somehow leads to him teaching music masterclasses at Oslo University. By the end you feel you've perused 10 fascinating lives, not one.

James McNair

Bowie Odyssey 71

★★★★

Simon Goddard

OMNIBUS PRESS. £14.99

Finding *Hunky Dory*: dazzling Bowie almanac reaches second chapter.

Rock history in an ice-blue Freddie Burretti suit, Simon Goddard's project to write a book about each year of David Bowie's '70s continues in suitably gorgeous style. As the novelistic narrative begins, Beckenham-era Bowie is spluttering along like his Riley car with *The Man Who Sold The World* stalled, and Marc Bolan is at Number 1 "forever it seems". Yet there are also fresh starts: Zowie, Ziggy, first brushes with Andy Warhol, Lou Reed and Iggy Pop. Meanwhile, key scenes – The Sombrero, Max's Kansas City, Glastonbury Fair – are reanimated with the newness of a colourised photograph. Goddard's research allows him to time-slip into the mores and moods of '71, Bowie contextualised alongside the Gay Liberation Front, The Magic Roundabout, the price of fish fingers. Those who prefer their facts straight might flinch, but Bowie Odyssey 71 is as lusciously all-enveloping as its subject demands. Roll on 1972.

Victoria Segal

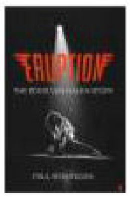
Eruption: The Eddie Van Halen Story

★★★★

Paul Brannigan

FABER & FABER. £20

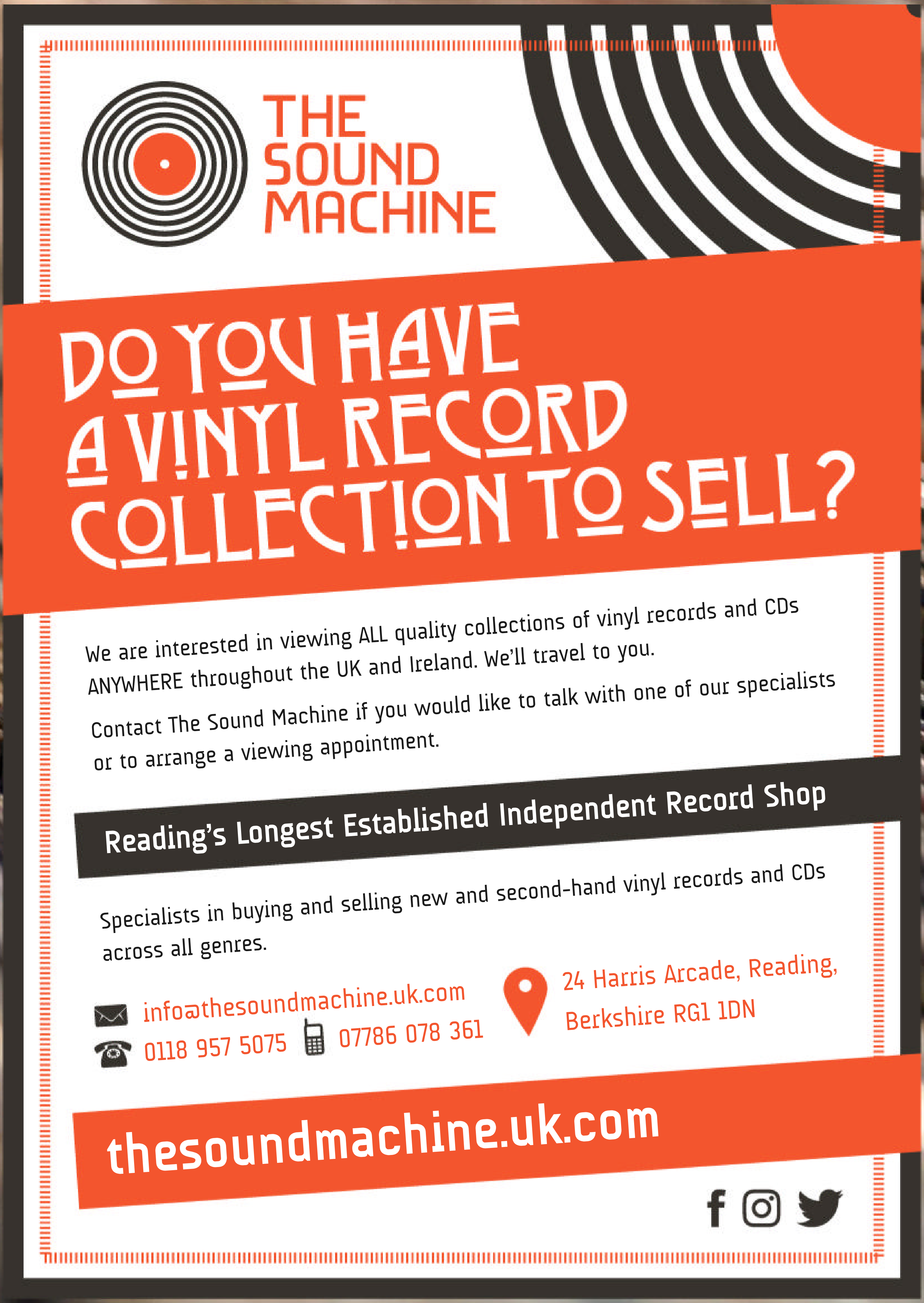
Affectionate and unflinching portrait of metal guitar's Mount Everest.



Though Eruption gives Eddie Van Halen's guitar sorcery top billing – Thin Lizzy's Scott Gorham and more recall their slack-jawed awe – former Kerrang! and Planet Rock editor Paul Brannigan goes deep here, his detailed, yet relatively concise biography probing Van Halen's psyche as well as his music. Alcohol, we see clearly, is the fatal flaw in the guitarist's tight-knit Dutch émigré family, and as he slips toward self-destruction (and, in time, redemption) he and first wife Valerie Bertinelli's cocaine high as they write their marriage vows is telling. Brannigan is excellent on Van Halen and David Lee Roth's tirade-strewn power struggle, and on the Sammy Hagar-era's unit-shifting highs and seamy lows. And who knew Heart's Wilson sisters were propositioned by EVH and his brother Alex, or that a Pete Townshend collaboration fell through when he lost Pete's number?

James McNair

Getty



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Reflect what you are: The Velvet Underground (from left) John Cale, Lou Reed (at front), Moe Tucker, Nico, Sterling Morrison; (insets from top) Reed in LA, 1966; John Cale with Morrison and Reed; Andy Warhol (centre) cuddles up with Paul Morrissey (left) and Reed, in split screen with Tucker (right).

Riding into the sun

Thrillingly immersive documentary mirrors the Velvets' questing spirit, says **Manish Agarwal**.

The Velvet Underground

★★★★★

Dir: Todd Haynes

KILLER FILMS/APPLE TV+. ST

A BELOVED AUTEUR making a feature documentary about their favourite group is no guarantee of cinema gold – see Gimme Danger (2016), Jim Jarmusch's functional, pedestrian profile of The Stooges – but there's no director better suited to chronicling The Velvet Underground than Todd Haynes. Iconic musicians have informed Haynes' dramatic work since his still startling 1987 student short Superstar, which used Barbie dolls to tell Karen Carpenter's heartbreaking story, through to 2007's nonlinear Dylan deconstruction I'm Not There, via his 1998 cult classic Velvet Goldmine. That movie's glam-Citizen Kane riff on Bowie and Iggy mythology captures its subjects' essence thanks to its wildly imaginative vision, the precise opposite of an officially sanctioned biopic.

The Velvet Underground is neither fiction nor unauthorised. Its meticulously composed two hours use a chronological structure and entwine archival treasure with present day recollections. And that's where the similarities with standard rock docs end. Haynes ensures that the trailblazing sonics are matched by his visual language: a mesmerising, constantly shifting tapestry of rare clips, stills and illustrative experimental fragments most often presented in split screen. The results are mind-melting, most notably an extended montage for Heroin which giddily replicates the song's illicit, spike-into-vein rush.

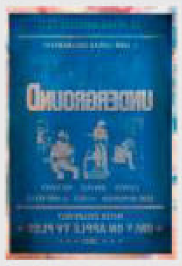
The film's first third contextualises its primary forces: Lou Reed, John Cale and New York's febrile artistic community in the 1960s. Haynes spotlights Reed's sexuality, balancing Lou's assertion that his parents consented to him receiving electroconvulsive therapy in order to "shock the gayness" out of him with his psychotherapist sister Merrill's exasperated refutation of this claim. Brilliant yet troubled, the singer/guitarist's trip through teenage doo wop 45s, college bar bands and staff songwriter gig at budget label Pickwick is paralleled by viola prodigy Cale's journey from the Welsh valleys to the piano-smashing heart of Manhattan's modern classical scene, where he's mentored by minimalists La Monte Young and Marian Zazeela.

Resplendent in cut-off denim, the drone duo are among a roll call of interviewees including the late Jonas Mekas, the godfather of American avant-garde cinema (to whom this doc is dedicated); Velvets guitarist Sterling Morrison's widow Martha; Nico paramour Jackson Browne, who opened for the group during his Greenwich Village days; and film critic Amy Taubin, a participant in Andy Warhol's multimedia adventures at The Factory. Contributors are either a collaborator or first-hand witness, from Warhol superstar and Velvets dancer Mary Woronov to manager and publicist Danny Fields.

Surviving members Cale and Moe Tucker offer the sharpest insights into their synthesis of disparate pop and noise elements, the bassist highlighting its pathfinding duality: "A standard was set, for how to be elegant and how to be brutal." The drummer comes into her own in a bravura mid-section as the Nico-augmented quartet take on California hippydom: "You cannot change minds by handing a flower to some bozo who wants to shoot you."

The final act details a gradual disintegration following 1968's fierce second album *White Light/White Heat*, contrasting Cale and Morrison's sad departures with the first inklings of their seismic future impact via the testimony of Boston and Provincetown concert attendees Jonathan Richman and John Waters. Haynes avoids any clichéd discussion of their enduring influence, wrapping up instead with another hypnotic visual flourish that culminates in a disarming piece of candid footage you'll want to experience unspoiled.

> "A standard was set, for how to be elegant and how to be brutal."
> JOHN CALE



WHAT WE'VE LEARNT

- John Cale has never met his multi-instrumentalist replacement Doug Yule.
- Jonathan Richman saw The Velvet Underground play "60 or 70 times" in his native Boston. As well as being Sterling Morrison's guitar protégé, he can impersonate Lou Reed and Moe Tucker too.
- Tucker still hates West Coast "love peace crap".

Couresty of Apple (4), Alamy

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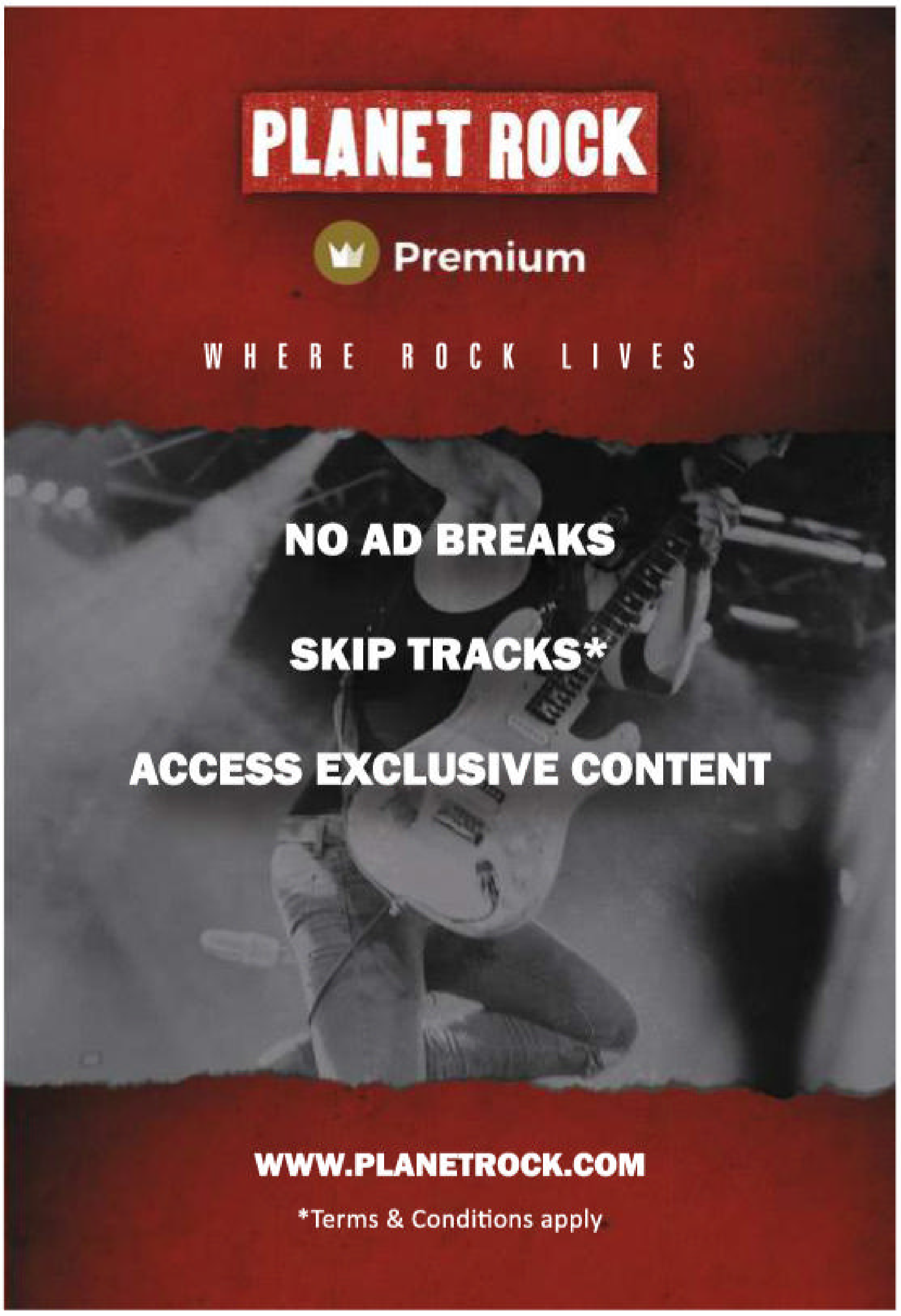
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Innovative producer, tireless collaborator: Lee 'Scratch' Perry.

The Mighty Upsetter

A reggae titan and master trickster left the planet on August 29.

KEITH RICHARDS, Adrian Sherwood and Linton Kwesi Johnson all likened Lee 'Scratch' Perry to Salvador Dali. Like the Catalonian surrealist, Scratch rejoiced in outré facial hair, saw the duality of the spiritual and earthly, and moved in the celebrity firmament. But more than Dali, Scratch can be said to have revolutionised his artform, and in revealing the endless possibilities of dub, influenced the wider musical world in ways still being fathomed.

Born in rural Hanover Parish, Jamaica on March 20, 1936, Perry's mother was an "Ettu queen," whose spirit dances could be traced back to the Yoruba people of West Africa. He numbered Fats Domino and James Brown as early musical touchstones, telling MOJO that music made him "harder than I was before, making me to be an aggressive person for my rights."

After working for Kingston producers including Clement 'Sir Coxsone' Dodd and Joe Gibbs, Scratch hit big with 1968's early reggae landmark People Funny Boy. In 1969, he helmed The Upsetters' UK Number 5 hit Return Of Django, and the year after that produced the first of two albums for The Wailers.

Though Scratch was stung by Bob Marley's defection to Chris Blackwell's Island Records in 1972 (Scratch was reputed to have had a picture of the Tuff Gong on a dartboard), virtuoso, unique, innovative productions including 1973's game-changing *Upsetters 14 Dub Blackboard Jungle* kept flowing out of him. He completed his legendary Black Ark studio at his Washington Gardens home in Kingston in early 1974; in time, the inspiration-over-restriction 4-track set-up would bring forth such preternaturally charged reggae classics as Max Romeo's *War Ina Babylon*, Junior Murvin's *Police & Thieves*, The Upsetters' *Super Ape* and The Congos' *Heart Of The Congos*, several of which were licensed to Island for international release. In London in 1977, he also found time to produce The Clash's Complete Control.

Yet turmoil was approaching: relations with Island broke down, and decay seized the Black Ark, which was consumed by fire in mid-1983. It is widely believed that the increasingly rum and ganja-addled producer did the burning himself, to free himself from avaricious hangers on. He moved to London in the mid-'80s and then, at the end of the decade, to Switzerland, where he lived with his wife and manager Mireille Campbell. A vast amount of music would be released over the next three decades – a tireless collaborator, Scratch's foils included Keith Richards, George Clinton and the Beastie Boys – and while few would compare the results to his golden period, his cosmic riddles were always a joy to hear. In a 2019 encounter, this writer found him to be a walking art installation with a suitcase full of mystic stones, given to gnomic talk of God, Satan and Stan Lee, though his old pal Max Romeo assured MOJO that Scratch always talked to him normally.

"Serious joke, that's what it is," Scratch told me, then a hale, clean-living 83. "I am a good man, I am sure of that."

He released new music in August and was planning to tour the UK in October. His death, in Jamaica, was sudden. Among many tribute-payers, Scratch co-conspirator Alex Paterson called him "the dub original specialist and chemist of the most high," adding, "the disco devil has left Babylon."

Ian Harrison

UPSETTER
BLACK BOARD JUNGLE

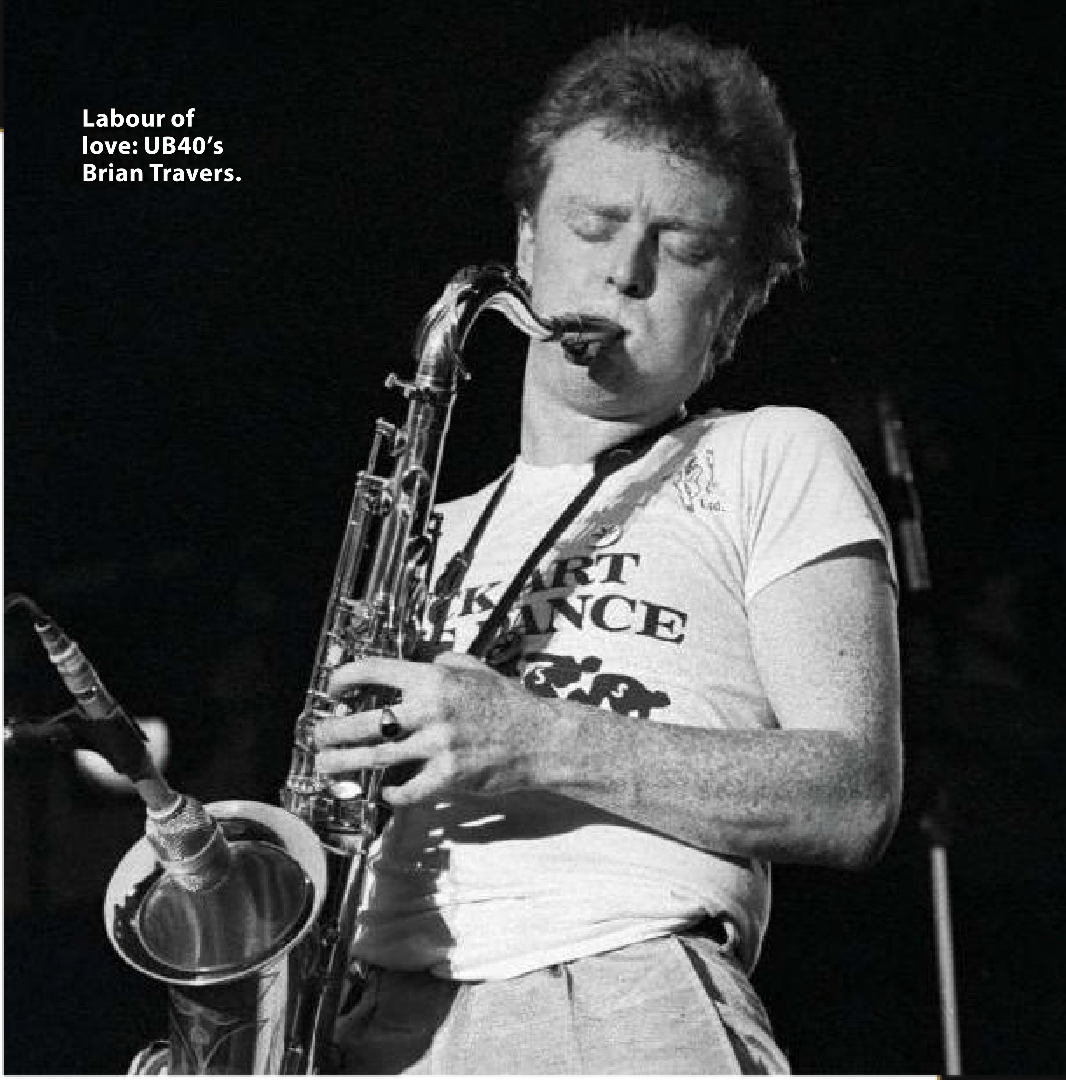
THE LEGACY

The Album: The Upsetters *Upsetters 14 Dub Blackboard Jungle* (Upsetters, 1973)

The Sound: Mixed at King Tubby's studio using rhythms from extant Scratch productions, this trailblazing, limited edition dub release is like sonic Kirlian photography, an out-of/into-focus capturing of the musical ghost in the machine. Within, stereo moves spatially, sound changes size and the event horizon of bass is inescapable. Who invented dub is up for debate, but who made it sing was Scratch.

> "Serious joke, that's what it is."
> LEE 'SCRATCH' PERRY

© Adrian Boot/urbanimage.t


Labour of love: UB40's Brian Travers.

Nanci Griffith

Songbird and Activist

BORN 1953

Born in small-town Seguin, Texas and raised in Austin, Nanci Griffith was 12 when she wrote her first song, entitled A New Generation. That same year she made her debut at a little coffee house, accompanying herself on guitar. "Folk is where I always wanted to be," Griffith said. But aside from the sweetness of her clear-as-water voice, she was no folk purist. Even "folkabilly" – her own hybrid term – doesn't cover the variety of her 18 studio albums, from *There's A Light Beyond These Woods* (1978) to *Intersection* (2012).

As a kid she loved Odetta, Woody Guthrie, Loretta Lynn, and later The Clash. But her epiphany, aged 14, was a Townes Van Zandt concert she attended with her beatnik dad. When Van Zandt sang Tecumseh Valley, a wrenching ballad about a girl called Caroline – Griffith's middle name – she took the song to her heart. Some of her own finely drawn story-songs about small-town life share Van Zandt's literacy and loneliness.

After years on the Texas folk circuit and the road, and a broken marriage, Griffith moved to Nashville in the '80s. Her major label albums made the country charts; covers of her songs by country singers like Kathy Mattea and Suzy Bogguss (Love At The Five And Dime; Outbound Plane) did better still. But Griffith sang covers too. Her version of Julie Gold's From A Distance made the Top 10 in Ireland. And her 1993 covers album *Other Voices, Other Rooms*, featuring guest slots by the songwriters, including Bob Dylan, Guy Clark, Emmylou Harris and John Prine, made the pop charts and won a Grammy.

A committed activist, she worked with musicians including Buddy Holly's Crickets, Peter Buck, Counting Crows, Indigo Girls, U2 and, for the Grammy-winning An Irish Evening, The Chieftains. Griffith had a close relationship with Ireland and the UK, where she had a devoted following. But Nashville remained her home. She died there in August, aged 68.

Sylvie Simmons

Charles 'Chuck' Connor

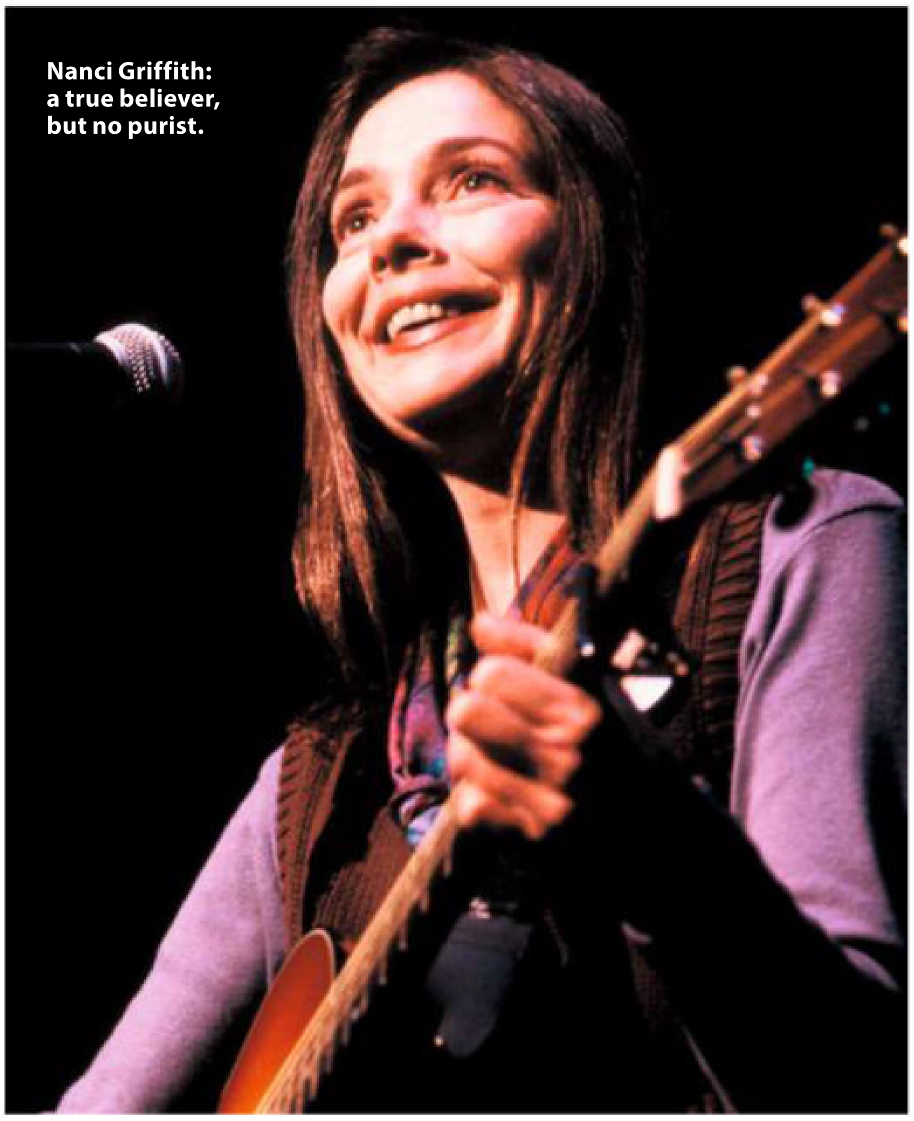
Kept A Knockin'

BORN 1935

LITTLE RICHARD

Foundational New Orleans-born rock'n'roll drummer Charles 'Chuck' Connor joined Little Richard's road band The Upsetters at the age of 18, having worked with Professor Longhair. His distinctive snare and heavy bass drum work became a much-imitated style. Earl Palmer had drummed on breakthrough single Tutti Frutti, but on the road Richard told Connor he wanted "more energy." "He made me change so it was more heavy on the bass drum," the drummer said in Charles White's The Life And Times Of Little Richard. Connor started recording hits with Richard in 1956 with She's Got It and 1957's Keep A Knockin', its distinctive shuffle intro copied by John Bonham on Led Zeppelin's Rock And Roll. After his bandleader's first retirement in 1957, Connor performed with James Brown, Sam Cooke, Jackie Wilson, and many others over the years. He formed Chuck Connor's Upsetters in 1980, reunited with his former boss in 1990 and in 2013 recorded the aptly named album *Still Knockin'*.

Geoff Brown


Nanci Griffith: a true believer, but no purist.

Getty (4)

Brian Travers

UB40 saxophonist

BORN 1959

Born in Birmingham, Brian Travers was an apprentice electrician before joining UB40 in 1978. Schoolfriends who learned to play and write reggae together, their first hit was Food For Thought, a UK Number 4 in April 1980. As on other early successes, including Top 10s My Way Of Thinking and One In Ten, Travers' snaking saxophone was an essential element of the UB40 sound. After tempering their militant style, worldwide success followed 1983's pop-reggae covers set *Labour Of Love*, their version of Neil Diamond's Red Red Wine reaching Number 1 in the UK and America. Also a film-maker, Travers directed videos for the group and the 1987 concert movie UB40 – CCCP: Live In Moscow, and co-wrote *Labour Of Love*'s accompanying film. He stayed with the group after singer Ali Campbell's acrimonious departure in 2008 and weathered bankruptcy proceedings in 2011. Also an exhibited abstract artist, Travers was diagnosed with a brain tumour on the eve of UB40's 40th anniversary tour. His final appearance with the band came on December 21, 2019, at the Arena Birmingham.

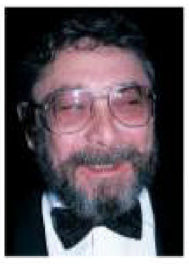
Ian Harrison

> "Folk is where I always wanted to be."
>
> NANCI GRIFFITH

Walter Yetnikoff

Music biz monarch

BORN 1933



Few music executives could rival the success and, indeed, notoriety of Walter Yetnikoff. A Columbia Law School graduate, he swiftly climbed the corporate ladder at CBS Records before assuming the top job in 1975 and eventually being hailed as "the best president of any record company" by Michael Jackson. Despite being afflicted with drug and alcohol addictions, Yetnikoff presided over the superstar careers of Bruce Springsteen, Barbra Streisand, Billy Joel and more in inimitable fashion. In his 2004 autobiography he reflected of his years as a fire-breathing power player: "I successfully created a mutual balance of terror between me and my artists." Between the blockbuster sales of Jackson's *Thriller* and playing an integral role in the $2bn sale of CBS to Sony in 1988, his reputation as an apex executive was firmly secured. He died of bladder cancer, aged 87.

George Garner

The Wanderer: Don Everly in 1965; (below) with brother Phil (left), "the most beautiful sounding duo ever."

Bye Bye Love

Harmonising sibling **Don Everly** left us on August 21.

"WHEN JOHN and I started to write songs, I was Phil and he was Don." The Everly brothers may not have been among rock'n'roll's first wave of hillbilly cats, nor did they outrage morality, but in that short tribute, Paul McCartney underlined their significance, what they inspired, and what was lost with the death at 84 of elder brother Don. No one could replicate Elvis, but you could aspire to be an Everly.

Born in Kentucky on February 1, 1937, as a pre-teen Don had been a crucial part of The Everly Family, a touring country and gospel quartet selling whatever they could on the side. When they foundered in 1953, Don befriended Nashville guitarist Chet Atkins, presenting himself initially as a writer, then as a duo with his younger brother Phil. After a flop self-penned debut single, their label, Cadence, paired them with songwriters Felice and Boudleaux Bryant, immediately hitting gold in 1957 with Bye Bye Love and Wake Up Little Susie.

While their universal teenage angst made the songs hit material, it was the Everlys' impeccable harmonies that set them apart – the elder brother usually took the lead, but trying to separate the two voices and identify Don or Phil would beguile all the wannabes. Don was more melodic but, in his own assessment, inclined to wander; Phil held it together; the harmonies creating an extra layer, the dissonance highlighting the melancholy. Looking back on hearing them for the first time, future collaborator Graham Nash said: "I decided that whatever music I was going to make in the future, I wanted it to affect people in the same way."

Quickly, however, the Everlys proved themselves to have ambitions beyond being mere teen idols. Lennon and McCartney would have noticed a competitive frisson: when Phil penned When Will I Be Loved, Don responded with ('Til) I Kissed You. Their 1958 LP *Songs Our Daddy Taught Us* was a concept album of country covers too far ahead even of the folk revival to find an audience, however. "I wanted the last [Cadence] album to be something that I loved," said Don, "but I didn't want it to have any possible singles." It bombed, yet sowed the seeds of Americana.

A switch to Warner Bros raised the game with Number 1s Cathy's Clown and Temptation, but trouble was brewing. Don struggled with amphetamine addiction, while conflict with their publishers denied the Everlys access to decent material (including songs they themselves wrote). The next five years would find them unsure of how to progress, yet in the confusion they produced much of their strongest work. Singles such as Love Is Strange, album cuts like Bowling Green, the LPs *Sing Great Country Hits* and *Two Yanks In England* (recorded with The Hollies) – all are as mesmerising as anything from their Cadence years, yet darkened with experience and wisdom. One more commercial failure, *Roots*, left them adrift at the start of the 1970s, a situation a new contract with RCA couldn't reverse, and tensions between the brothers spilled over, the fracture coming – violently – on-stage in 1973. They wouldn't speak for 10 years.

> "Songs Our Daddy Taught Us sowed the seeds of Americana."

The next decade saw Don have moderate country success, yet offers to reunite with a brother with whom he had little in common – professionally, personally or politically; Don was a committed Democrat, his sibling a Republican – eventually led to a triumphant reunion at Wembley Arena in 1983, three more albums and a final British tour in 2005. Phil passed in 2014. They may have pioneered rock'n'roll's fraternal feuds, but to the end they were, in Paul Simon's words, "the most beautiful sounding duo I have ever heard".

David Hutcheon

THE LEGACY

The Album: *Roots* (Warner Bros - Seven Arts, 1968)
The Sound: Their third envelope-pushing country album finds the brothers driving forward musically, mixing archive of the Everly Family's radio shows with lightly psychedelicised redos of T For Texas and Sing Me Back Home. The remake of Bye Bye Love's B-side, I Wonder If I Care As Much, has claim to be their most powerful three minutes.

Dezo Hoffman/Shutterstock, Getty

Paul Cotton

Poco guitar and voice

BORN 1943

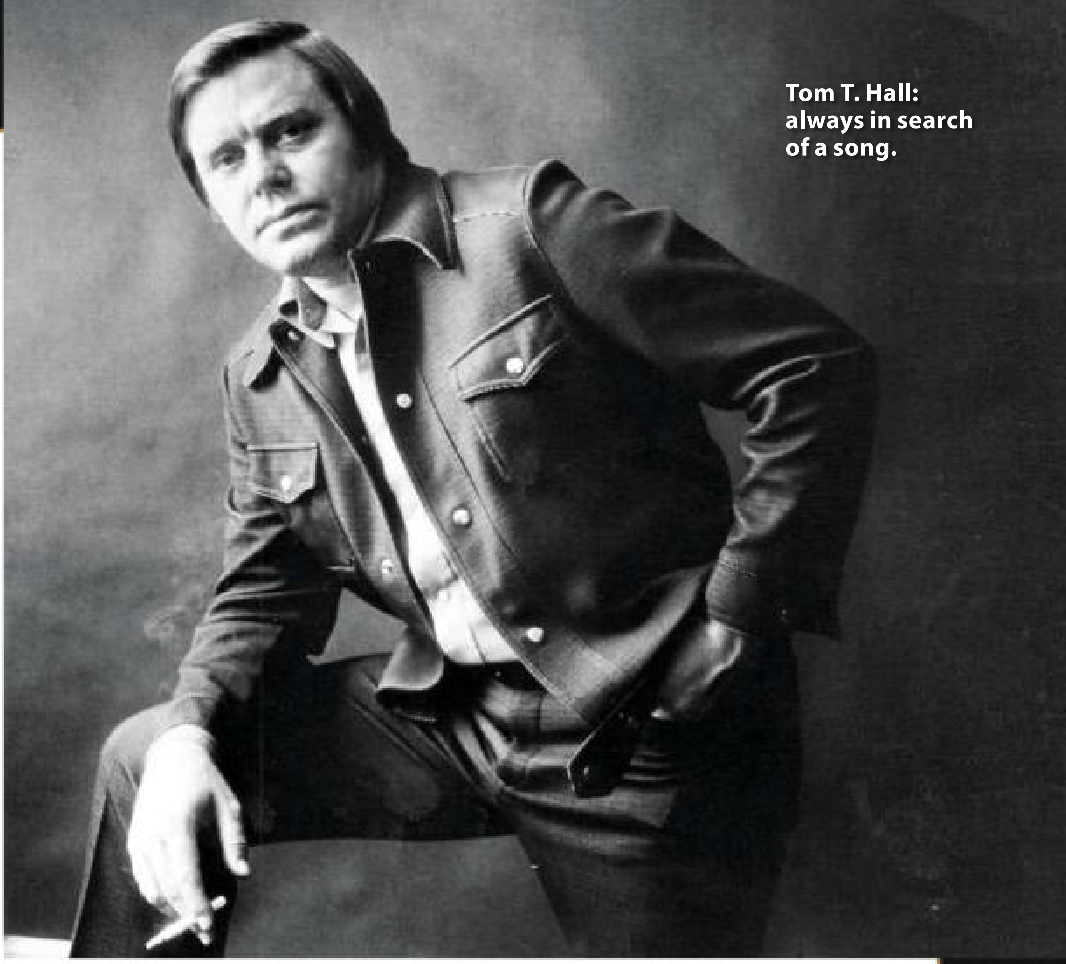
Alabama-born Paul Cotton first played with Chicago bands The Mus-Twangs and The Rovin' Kind, who morphed into psych-blues outfit Illinois Speed Press in 1968. The guitarist and singer replaced Jim Messina in Buffalo Springfield-affiliated southern California country rockers Poco for their third LP *From The Inside* in 1971. Buffeted by changing line-ups and years on the edge of a breakthrough, Cotton and steel guitarist Rusty Young intended 1978's *Legend* to be the debut long-player by their Cotton-Young Band. Instead, released under the Poco name, it went gold in the US and contained the Top 20 hits Crazy Love and Cotton's hymn to New Orleans, Heart Of The Night. Cotton left Poco in 1990, but rejoined in 1992, departing for the final time in 2010. He also played with the reformed Illinois Speed Press in 2009 and recorded five solo albums.

Clive Prior

Tom T. Hall

AKA The Storyteller

BORN 1936



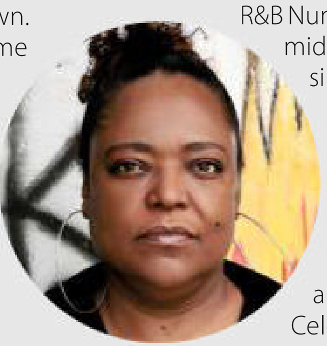
Tom T. Hall: always in search of a song.

After leaving the US Army, Kentucky-born Tom T. Hall was working as a radio announcer in West Virginia when his song DJ For A Day was recorded by Jimmy C Newman in 1963. So began a writing career which saw his songs – deceptively simple narratives which encapsulated the truths and complexities of the human condition, and transcended the country genre – covered by Johnny Cash, George Jones, Jerry Lee Lewis, Solomon Burke, Lee Hazlewood, Waylon Jennings, Scott Walker, The Shaggs and more. His biggest success as a composer came with Jeannie C Riley's Grammy-winning Harper Valley PTA, a hypocrisy-busting US Number 1 in 1968. A successful solo career followed, his empathic baritone delivering hits including 1972's (Old Dogs, Children And) Watermelon Wine, one of six US country Number 1s. Success slowed in the '80s, but he kept retirement at bay and released his last collection of co-writes in 2015. As well as winning numerous Bluegrass awards alongside his West Midlands-born wife Dixie Hall, in 2008 he joined the Country Music Hall Of Fame, while in 2019 he was elected to the Songwriters Hall Of Fame. He was also a published author.

Ian Harrison

THEY ALSO SERVED

DETROIT TECHNO artist and DJ **KELLI HAND** (below, b.1964) was inspired by the DJ-ing of Larry Levan in New York's Paradise Garage and the house sounds of Chicago and her hometown. Adopting the name **K-HAND**, she began releasing tracks in 1990, later forming her own Acacia Records imprint. She also recorded for the Warp, Studio !K7 and Tresor labels. A pioneering female presence in a male-dominated milieu, in 2017 she was declared First Lady Of Detroit by council decree.



IRON BUTTERFLY DRUMMER **RON BUSHY** (b.1941) laid down the beat for the hard-psych San Diego rockers who broke through with 1968's single In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida – originally a 17-minute organ-heavy monster jam with a lengthy Bushy solo on the multi-million-selling LP of the same name. After a 1971 split, they reformed regularly, the line-up always featuring Bushy. He finally bowed out in 2015, making one last appearance in 2018.

SAX/FLUTE player **DENNIS 'DEE TEE' THOMAS** (b.1951) was a founder member of jazz-funk band **Kool & The Gang**. Formed in the mid-'60s and signing to New York label De-Lite in 1969, by '74 they were in the US pop charts with three singles off 1973 LP *Wild And Peaceful* (Funky Stuff, Jungle Boogie and Hollywood Swinging, the first of nine US R&B Number 1s). In the mid-'70s, hiring singer **James 'JT' Taylor** led to more commercial highs with Top 10 hits Ladies Night, Too Hot and US Number 1 Celebration. On July 4, 2021 they played the 'Opening of America' Hollywood Bowl concert after Covid lockdowns. It was DT's farewell performance.

ALABAMA COUNTRY VOICE **RAZZY BAILEY** (below, b.1939) played with **Daily Bread** and **The Aquarians** before recording the love-powered country-soul radio hit (and Northern soul choice) I Hate Hate in 1974. After his songs were picked up by **Dicky Lee**, Bailey started having solo hits, scoring five Number 1s on the country charts, the last of which was 1981's She Left Love All Over Me. He also ran Razzy's Hit House studio outside Nashville, and released a final LP, *Damned Good Time*, in 2009.

DRUMMER **GARY 'CHICKEN' HIRSH** (b.1940) played with **Country Joe and the Fish** from 1967 to 1969. A self-proclaimed beatnik who took pride in his expulsion from art school, Hirsh was credited with finessing the audience-participation 'Fish Cheer' ("gimme an F-U-C-K") and was, reputedly, instrumental in popularising the rumour that banana peel was an effective marijuana substitute. Hirsh later sold art supplies, painted, and played jazz, reuniting with Country Joe McDonald when the mood took him.

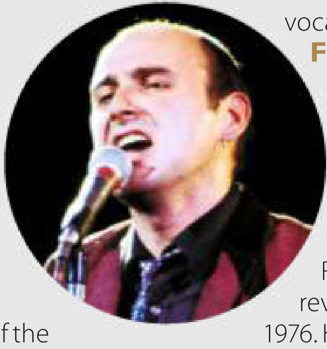
VOICE COACH **TONA DE BRETT** (b.1931) tutored names including **Adam Ant**, **Rick Parfitt**, **Lush**, **Annie Lennox**, **Bananarama**, **Rick Astley**, **Paul Young** and, as remembered in a scene from the 1980 Sex Pistols film The Great Rock'N'Roll Swindle, **Johnny Rotten**.

JAZZ BASSIST and producer **PETER IND** (b.1928) was playing on the Queen Mary in 1949 when he met pianist **Lennie Tristano**, who introduced him to New York's jazz scene. Uxbridge-born, Ind relocated in 1951, playing with Tristano, **Lee Konitz**, **Paul Bley** and others; he later moved into production, working with **Zoot Sims**, **Gerry Mulligan** and more, engineered for Verve and Atlantic, and recorded solo. After returning to Britain in 1966, he ran the Wave label and studio, opened Hoxton's Bass Clef and Tenor Clef jazz clubs, and played into his nineties.

SINGER-SONGWRITER **POWELL ST. JOHN** (b.1940) played folk blues in Austin, Texas – in the **Waller Creek Boys**, his bandmate was one **Janis Joplin** – before forming his rock band **The Conqueroo**. Asked by electric jug player **Tommy Hall**, Powell wrote five songs, including Kingdom Of Heaven and Slide Machine, for psychedelic renegades **The 13th Floor Elevators**. He also played with **Mother Earth**, while his songs would be recorded by Joplin, **Doug Sahm**, **Boz Scaggs** and **Roky Erickson** among others. Later in life, "psych savant" Powell recorded with Elevators personnel.

PRODUCER **CHUCKY THOMPSON** (b.1968) played percussion for **Chuck Brown** before becoming one of the Bad Boy label's Hitmen team. A multi-instrumentalist, he worked on albums by **Notorious BIG**, **Mary J Blige** and **Faith Evans**, adding classic spins to hip-hop and R&B. He also worked with **TLC**, **New Edition** and **Nas**, ran his own ChuckLife label, and was working on a film about Washington's go-go scene when he died.

NASHVILLE-BORN session ace **KENNY MALONE** (b.1938) played on such well-known songs as **Dolly Parton**'s Jolene, **Crystal Gayle**'s Don't It Make My Brown Eyes Blue and **Dobie Gray**'s Drift Away. Yet the drummer, whose individual style utilised hands, brushes and other percussion elements as well as sticks, had a wider sessionography which included dates for **Johnny Cash**, **John Prine**, **Merle Haggard**, **Waylon Jennings**, **Wanda Jackson**, **Johnny Paycheck**, **Dan Auerbach**, **Kurt Vile** and many more. Still working into his eighties, he also played jazz and Christian music.



ESSEX-BORN falsetto vocalist **BOB FISH** (left, b.1949) sang with **Mickey Jupp** before joining multi-voiced rock'n'roll/R&B/doo wop revisitors **Darts** in 1976. He sang lead on Come Back My Love and It's Raining, both Number 2 hits in 1978. Disillusioned, he left in 1980, released two solo 45s, moved into management and reinvented himself as an autoharp player. He reunited with Darts in 2006.

Geoff Brown and Ian Harrison

Marie Staggat, Getty (4)

New Radicals
you get what you give
New Radicals

PENNSYLVANIA
GREGG ALEXANDER
NEW RADICALS

The cat in the bucket hat (clockwise from main); Gregg Alexander fronts the New Radicals; hit LP and single; the band (Danielle Brisebois, second right); Alexander gets back in the saddle for the inauguration of President Biden, January 2021.

OCTOBER 1998

...New Radicals bust out

OCTOBER 20 In 2005, Joni Mitchell released her *Artist's Choice* compilation, curating masterworks by Bob Dylan, Duke Ellington, Leonard Cohen, Billie Holiday and others. It closed with You Get What You Give, a 1998 release by the New Radicals, of which she wrote, "It was sassy and smart and had real emotions. It rose from the swamp of 'McMusic' like a flower of hope."

The song appears on the New Radicals' smart LP *Maybe You've Been Brainwashed Too*, released on October 20, 1998. Anthemic, barbed and possessed of a preternatural freshness, You Get What You Give blended uplift and accusation, taking aim at health inequality, big business and an America seen as dumbing ever downwards, and the power of the individual to resist and transcend. It also called Beck, Courtney Love and Marilyn Manson "fake" and threatened them with a bashing. Speaking to Canada's MuchMusic TV, intense, six-foot-five New Radicals mainman Gregg Alexander questioned critics latching onto the celebrity angle rather than his wider social critique. "[It] was a little bit of a test of the emergency broadcast system of pop culture, to see whether it's pop culture that's going in the wrong direction," he said, 'Reni' hat tight over his eyes, "and it turns out it is."

Alexander, originally of Grosse Pointe, Michigan, was raised in a Jehovah's Witness household with a Motown fan mother and Prince's Purple Rain as his epiphany. He released his debut *Michigan Rain* in 1989, aged just 19. A second LP, *Intoxifornication*, followed in 1992. Neither album sold. It was a wiser man, with simultaneously less and more to lose, who launched New Radicals in 1997. Recorded in Detroit and Los Angeles, *Maybe You've Been Brainwashed Too* featured regular keyboardist Danielle Brisebois alongside contributions from session aces Alessandro Alessandroni, Greg Phillinganes, Lenny Castro, Rusty Anderson and Josh Freese, plus songwriter Rick Nowels on keyboards. With the sounds compared to Prince, Todd Rundgren, Hall And Oates and The Waterboys, the lyrics addressed greed, the military-industrial combine, consumerism, religion, hypocrisy, racism, sexism and global doom. Alexander didn't excuse himself from blame, lamenting on the title track, "So cynical, so hip, so full of shit/They told us to shut the fuck up and write another hit."

> "I'm ready to be carted around like a piece of meat."
> **GREGG ALEXANDER**

On October 31, You Get What You Give was at Number 34 on Billboard's Modern Rock Tracks chart, a place below Oasis' Acquiesce. Its climb was helped by a goofy, subversive video set in a mall, where authority figures are netted and caged, Mods ride around on scooters and kids dance and throw food. A live band featuring guitarist Brad Fernquist and bass player Sasha Krivtsov was formed, with dates commencing the following month. Shows could include two performances of the single plus album track In Need Of A Miracle segueing into a cover of Musical Youth's Pass The Dutchie, and I Hope I Didn't Just Give Away The Ending quoting Lou Reed's Walk On The Wild Side.

"I'm excited to have a catchy single," Alexander told Billboard on November 14, 1998. "I enjoy watching it climb up the chart… I'm ready to be carted around like a piece of meat. You have to cut a deal with the machine and be thrown to the wolves." You Get What You Give would peak at US Number 36, and *Maybe You're Brainwashed Too* at 41, in

January 1999. In the UK the single reached Number 5 and the album Number 10 in April.

Then, in May '99, dates including a UK tour were cancelled. On June 12, Alexander released a statement announcing that the New Radicals were over. "I accomplished most of my goals with this record… over the last several months, I'd lost interest in fronting a 'One Hit Wonder'," he said, perhaps prematurely, "to the point that I was wearing a hat while performing so that people wouldn't see my lack of enthusiasm." His label and management were shocked, the latter's Martin Kirkup observing, "Gregg has pulled the plug on himself."

In decades that followed, Alexander wrote hits for Ronan Keating, Sophie Ellis-Bextor, Texas and others, and shared a Grammy with Rick Nowels for writing Santana's The Game Of Love in 2003. He also worked in the charitable sector and co-composed the OST for 2013's musical comedy drama Begin Again. The New Radicals seemed done and dusted.

Then came the inauguration of Joe Biden as US President on January 20, 2021, and a band reunion for a spirited run-through of You Get What You Give on the virtual Parade Across America. They were, Alexander explained, playing in memory of the new President's late son Beau, who drew strength from the song when fighting brain cancer, and "with the prayer of Joe being able to bring our country together again, with compassion, with honesty, and with justice for a change, because we need it."

Naturally, he performed it with his original bucket hat on.

Ian Harrison

Rude boy into jail: Ian Brown outside court.

Brown sent down

OCTOBER 23 At Manchester Crown Court, **ex-Stone Roses singer Ian Brown fails to have his conviction overturned for threatening behaviour on a BA flight from Paris to Manchester in February 1998. Brown was accused of threatening to "chop the hands off" air stewardess Christine Cooper and banging on Captain Martin Drake's cockpit door. "All I was doing was messing around," says Brown. Jailed for four months, he's sent to Kirkham Open Prison near Preston, where he is displeased one mealtime by unwanted custard being poured on his cake. Guitarist Aziz Ibrahim, who was on the flight, says Brown was "standing up for himself", while Roses bassist Mani calls the sentence a "fucking disgrace". Brown is released on Christmas Eve.**

ALSO ON!

FAREWELL, SINGING COWBOY

2 Country titan **Gene Autry** (above) dies aged 91. A singer-songwriter, movie and TV star and rodeo rider – his trusty steed was TV's Champion The Wonder Horse – Autry's 1929-1956 career saw him hailed as 'America's Favourite Cowboy'.

FARM'S WAY

3 The 11th Farm Aid is held at the Tweeter Centre, Tinley Park, Illinois. Founders **Willie Nelson**, **Neil Young** and **John Mellencamp** play, as do **Steve Earle**, **Wilco**, **Phish** and others, to raise funds for US family farmers trapped in mortgage debt.

GUYVILLE EXILES

13 In answer to the all-female Lilith Fair festival, a male-only tour called The Frasier Fair begins a 27-date run in San Diego. Named after Kelsey Grammer's TV comedy, – as suggested by **Rufus Wainwright** – **John Doe** of **X** and **Pete Droge** also play.

FAIR CHER

19 **Cher**'s anthem of survival Believe is out. Her first US Number 1 since 1974's Dark Lady, it tops charts around the world and starts a craze for Auto-Tuned vocals.

COOKIN' WITH GAS

19 **Fatboy Slim**'s second LP *You've Come A Long Way, Baby* enters the charts at Number 2. One of the LP's four Top 10 45s, Gangster Tripping hits UK Number 4.

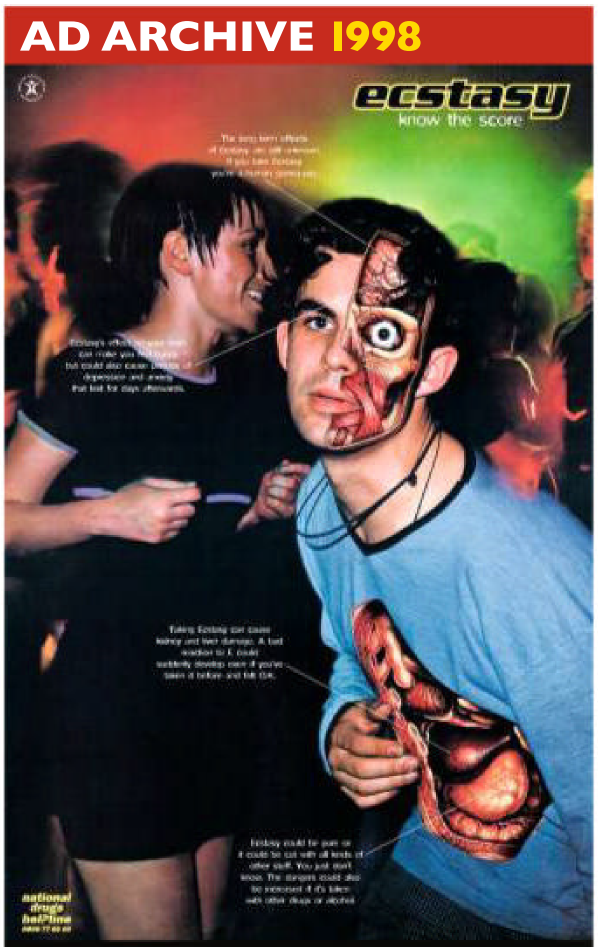
TOP TEN

SPANISH SINGLES OCTOBER 3

1	**DEPECHE MODE**	ONLY WHEN I LOSE MYSELF	MUTE/ RCA
2	**ROBBIE WILLIAMS**	MILLENNIUM	CHRYSALIS
3	**DES'REE**	LIFE	S2
4	**PRAS MICHEL FT. ODB & MYA**	GHETTO SUPERSTAR (THAT IS WHAT YOU ARE)	INTERSCOPE
5	**MOLOTOV**	PUTO	UNIVERSAL
6	**JULIO IGLESIAS**	MORALITO (LA GOTA FRIA)	COLUMBIA
7	**AEROSMITH**	I DON'T WANT TO MISS A THING	COLUMBIA
8	**STARDUST**	MUSIC SOUNDS BETTER WITH YOU	VIRGIN
9	**MOLOTOV**	GIMME THA POWER	UNIVERSAL
10	**MODERN TALKING FT. ERIC SINGLETON**	BROTHER LOUIE '98	HANSA

Des'ree: she's still avoiding ghosts at Number 3.

AD ARCHIVE 1998



The National Drugs Helpline scares ravers by saying their disco biscuits will make their brain, skull and organs visible. So get high on music!

Brian Slade, in flame: Rhys-Meyers channels Ziggy avatar Maxwell Demon.

GLAM FILM DEBUTS

OCTOBER 23 Todd Haynes' movie Velvet Goldmine hits the screen. Moving between 1984, the days of glam and beyond, the OTT musical spectacle stars Jonathan Rhys-Meyers as Bowie-esque recluse Brian Slade, who finds infamy with his Ziggy-style creation Maxwell Demon and by faking his own death. Ewan McGregor appears as Iggy-Lou hybrid Curt Wild while Christian Bale plays investigative journalist Arthur Stuart. Bowie refuses permission to use his music, though the soundtrack features new recordings by Thom Yorke, Ron Asheton, Bernard Butler, Thurston Moore, Andy Mackay and others. Lindsay Kemp plays a pantomime dame and Sandy Powell's lavish costumes win a BAFTA. Reviews are mixed, receipts lukewarm, but cult appreciation persists.

Getty (5), Alamy (3)

THE SCOTTISH WORLD CUP SQUAD
We Have a Dream
OFFICIAL SCOTTISH WORLD CUP SQUAD SINGLE

Understudy pressure: (clockwise from bottom left) Revolver with Nick Dewey (circled); Mark E Smith makes sure the show goes on at Reading '98; Hendrix and Humperdinck flank gun-toting Cat Stevens; tartan vinyl; The Black Keys.

Who were rock's last-minute substitutes?

Time to resolve rock's thorniest problems around the blazing campfire of musical knowledge.

I was saddened by (Slipknot drummer) Joey Jordison's death in July, and never knew he'd stood in for Metallica's Lars Ulrich at short notice at the Download Festival in 2004. Any other good examples of "is there a doctor in the house" concert situations?

Keith Gibbons, via e-mail

MOJO says: For last-minute, hoping-against-hope substitutions, it's hard to beat the time The Who played San Francisco's Cow Palace in November 1973. When a befuddled Keith Moon couldn't finish the show – downing sticks during Magic Bus – Pete Townshend asked the crowd, "Can anybody out there play drums?" Nineteen-year-old Scott Halpin duly volunteered and acquitted himself well, though historians differ on what he played. Another seat-of-pants drummer switch involved The Fall at the 1998 Reading Festival: having abandoned sticksman Tom Head en route, Chemical Brothers manager Nick Dewey, formerly of shoegazers Revolver, was recruited backstage with an hour to go. Though Dewey protested he hadn't played for years (as Dave Simpson's estimable Fall memberography The Fallen recounts), guitarist and pressganger Neville Wilding replied, "Don't worry about that, we're all pissed anyway." The gig went surprisingly well, though Mark E Smith appeared bloodied. What goes on in the mind of the last-minute stand-in was revealed by pianist/organist Chris Morrison, who deputised for all of Rory Gallagher's fogbound-in- London backing group at the Birmingham Town Hall in December 1975. "I can't begin to comprehend my bravado and Rory's recklessness," he wrote in 2015, recalling Gallagher yelling key changes at him in real time. "How I coped, God help me, my brain refuses to say." Again, reports say the show was a good one. To end, let's go back to July 25, 1971, when the theoretically split Stooges played Wamplers Lake Pavilion in Michigan. With Iggy and James Williamson absent, the Asheton brothers turned up and asked the crowd if anyone fancied being frontman for the night. Fan Steve Richards volunteered. Iggy later recalled hearing a recording: "I used to hear it and thought, 'I don't remember. I was pretty good!' …then I realised that was the guy." Naturally, please let us know your suggestions.

BLACK KEYS CD QUERY

On listening to track 15 from the CD accompanying MOJO's July edition I noticed that this version of The Black Keys' Yearnin' is NOT the one from *The Big Come Up*. And it ain't the alternate 'live' version from *Slaying Since 1996* either. So wossitollabout?

Martin Schreiber, Lahr, Germany

MOJO says: Good point, Martin. We asked our CD compiler-in-chief Dave Henderson, who says, "Patrick Boissel at Alive Naturalsound says he supplied the 'streaming' version of the track, which is different from the live version." So there we have it.

ROCK'S WEIRDEST BILLS

On May 9, 1980, I saw Eric Clapton at the Glasgow Apollo. I was surprised to learn that the 'special guests' for 'God' were none other than Chas & Dave. Have you got other examples of support bands that make you think "What the hell?"

Paul Murray, via e-mail

MOJO says: Echo & The Bunnymen on the bill with Bad Manners at the Lyceum in October 1980 springs to mind, as does (suggests Keith Cameron) Slade supported by U2 and Discharge at the same venue in the same month. Other tasty examples include the Ramones supporting Toto, The Marshall Tucker Band paired with the Mahavishnu Orchestra, and The Jam opening for Blue Öyster Cult in the US. The Stranglers also favoured incongruous support acts, including, variously, Frank Sidebottom, a barber shop quartet and an elderly tap-dancer. But the most mindwarping cases, we're saying, are Engelbert Humperdinck on the same 1967 package tour as The Jimi Hendrix Experience, and the time Einstürzende Neubauten picked Leicester's drape-suited retro-teds Showaddywaddy as support in September '87 at the Kilburn National. (Showaddywaddy's Dave Bartram recalled, "We blew them off stage that night!") Readers, we hope you have examples to add.

REVERSING, FORWARDSLY?

Re: Who Ran Backwards? (Ask MOJO 334). In 1934, the MGM movie We Live Again had part of its soundtrack involving a Russian Orthodox church service mistakenly played backwards, but MGM producer Sam Goldwyn was so taken with it no one dared tell him it was a cock-up.

Kevin Forshaw, via e-mail

HELP MOJO

The burning question raised by MOJO 332, page 111: Israel Top 10 Singles on June 4, 1982. Can you explain/hypothesise why We Have A Dream by The Scottish World Cup Squad made it into the Israel Top 10 – storytelling, bagpipes and all?

Patrick Evens, via e-mail

MOJO says: It's a wonderful vision of international friendship, like 1979's Nottingham Forest tune We Got The Whole World In Our Hands outselling Michael Jackson and The Police in the Netherlands, or Three Lions reaching Number 16 in Germany. But who can explain it? Over to you!

CONTACT MOJO

Have you got a challenging musical question for the MOJO Brains Trust? E-mail **askmojo@bauermedia.co.uk** and we'll help untangle your trickiest puzzles.

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Q
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Activ-8 (Come With Us)

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BRITISH AUDIO specialist, Q Acoustics, is offering one lucky MOJO reader a chance to win a pair of Q Active 200 speakers with Google Cast worth £1,499!

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Want to win it? Who wouldn't? Then get Minister of The New New Super-Heavy Cruciverbalism Michael Jones' crossword filled in and send a scan of it to mojo@bauermedia.co.uk, making sure to type CROSSWORD 336 in the subject line. Entries without that subject line will not be considered. Please include your home address, e-mail and phone number, and say if you'd prefer a white or black finish, OK? The closing date for entries is **November 2**. For the rules of the quiz, see www.mojo4music.com

For more information on Q Acoustics products please visit www.qacoustics.co.uk

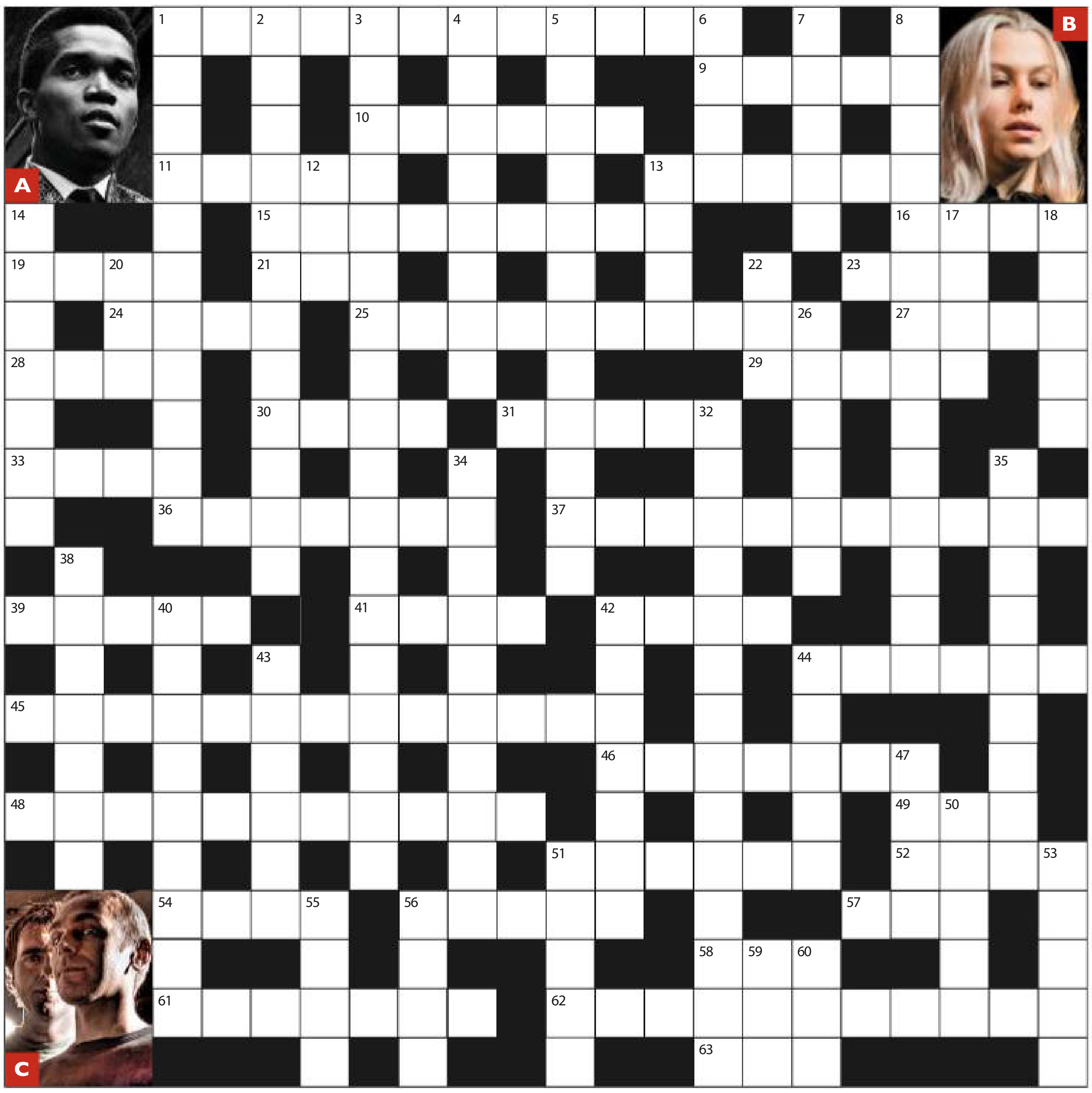
ANSWERS

MOJO 334

Across: 1 Clive Langer, 8 Lionel 11 Oxide, 12 Pure, 13 Ronan O'Rahilly, 14 Rowetta, 18 Ibex, 20 Mento, 25 Azure, 28 and 41D Rat Scabies, 29 Dominion, 31 Osibisa, 32 As, 33 Out, 35 Moe Asch, 36 Fon, 37 Eagles, 41 and 46D Hall Of The Mountain Grill, 42 CSA, 43 Crab, 45 Plug, 47 Sub, 49 Eden, 50 Why, 51 Prisoners, 53 Hives, 54 Stan Webb, 56 Lief, 59 Mai Tai, 62 Overend Watts

Down: 1 Charlie Tumahai, 2 Iron, 3 Exene, 4 Alarum, 5 Goth, 7 Rialto, 8 Levy, 9 Neu, 10 Liege, 12 Pere Ubu, 15 Woes, 16 Tar, 17 Ants, 19 Eddie Floyd, 21 Epic, 22 Tangram, 23 Nas, 24 Discs, 26 Zion, 27 Rite, 30 Mastodon, 34 Black Beer, 36 Frumpy, 38 Aunts, 39 Scabies, 40 Cherry Laine, 44 Backward, 48 EMI, 49 Electro, 51 PSB, 52 Odelay, 54 Sice, 55 Bela, 58 Cut

Winner: John Goddard of **Bradford** wins a Cyrus Audio ONE Cast amplifier.



Getty (3)

ACROSS

1 See photoclue A (6,6)
9 Nationality of The Pogues' Rover (5)
10 Jordan from War (6)
11 Don Henley's was at Sunset (5)
13 Fela Kuti or Cranberries protest song (6)
15 Arcade Fire's follow-up to *Funeral* (4,5)
16 He began with Golden Feelings (4)
19 Band that featured the three Farriss brothers (4)
21 *The* ---, where The Cure put The Caterpillar (3)
23 King Crimson's crimson record (3)
24 *Mogwai Young* ---- (Mogwai LP) (4)
25 Finnish band led by Michael Monroe (5,5)
27 Callahan, alias Smog (4)
28 Short-lived Julianne Regan project (4)
29/62 Lead track from *The Psychedelic Sounds Of The 13th Floor Elevators* (5,5,4,2)
30 He was born Paul Hewson (4)
31 Pepper, who played baritone sax (5)
33 Suede has no clothing label (4)
36 Paul, the singer and activist celebrated by the Manics (7)
37 Neil Young collaborator and guitarist with the E Street Band (4,7)
39 Who went there, live in 1970? (5)
41 Joe, the Telstar Man (4)
42 What's on or off for Shaun Ryder or Melle Mel (4)
44 ------ Free (Tom Robinson Band EP) (6)
45 *Animals'* head and tail (4,2,3,4)
46 It's when Ben Howard has a dream (7)
48 Their albums include *Anna* and *Concrete Love* (11)
49 Bob James record that features the hip-hop history-making Nautilus (3)
51 34 Down were born this way (6)
52 Jazz singer Stacey or cellist Julia (4)
54 The side of Squeeze's story (4)
56 Their debut album was *Brutalism* (5)
57 Pomus, who wrote songs with Mort Shuman (3)
58 Vow made by Fleetwood Mac (1,2)
61 Albini & Weston & Trainer (7)
62 See 29
63 The --- (The Doors) (3)

DOWN

1 Singer who delivered her First Farewell earlier this year (5,6)
2 Bob Dylan song covered by Johnny Cash and June Carter (2,4,2,4)
3 '60s psychedelia from Tommy James & The Shondells — or is it wrap music? (10,8)
4 Two hits for Cher and will.i.am (4,4)
5 "It's just a rumour that was spread around town" (Elvis Costello) (12)
6/18 Band led by Jenny Lewis and Blake Sennett (4,5)
7 For Throwing Muses, it was neither here nor there (5)
8 See photoclue B (6,8)
12 Ted who's led the Pharmacists (3)
13 Nothing to do with a Yeah Yeah Yeahs track (4)
14 Jeff, a Mother Of Invention who had his mind messed up by Lucille (7)
17 The dogs lay at her feet, say The Cult (4)
18 See 6
20 Dear God, they wrote in 1986 (1.1.1.)
22 Instrumental act that featured Herbie Flowers and John Williams (3)
26 Sadly it's a song on *High Violet* (6)
32 *Sticky Fingers* track first recorded by Marianne Faithfull (6,8)
34 See photoclue C (10)
35 Odd sort of number for Ladytron (9)
38 T.Rex's second Number 1 (3,2,2)
40 --------- *Songs* (Mercury Rev album) (9)
42 Indicates an LP by Rush (7)
43 *People, Hell And* ------ (posthumous Jimi Hendrix collection) (6)
44 He could be Frame or Lorimer (5)
47 Her name is Ono (4)
50 The -----, experimental jazz trio who did a *Drive By* (5)
51 Gainsbourg, who was Clyde to Bardot's Bonnie (5)
53 ----- Like These (Foo Fighters) (5)
55 An album by Yes, so to speak (4)
56 How Mike Score said he got so far away (1,3)
59 Peek or Hicks — or is he Steely? (3)
60 Initially comprised of McCluskey and Humphreys (1.1.1.)

Stone The Crows' Maggie Bell and guitarist Leslie Harvey, Weeley Festival, Essex, August 27, 1971; (below, centre) Bell today.

Maggie Bell and Stone The Crows

It began by the docks in Glasgow. But tragedy in Swansea spelt the end.

HELLO 1969

I'd get up and sing with Alex Harvey And His Soul Band at Le Cave down by the docks in Glasgow. They were going off to the Top Ten Club in Hamburg, but my mother wouldn't let me go. Alex said, "My wee brother Leslie plays guitar in The Kinning Park Ramblers, why don't you join them?" I did, and I had some of the happiest days of my life.

Leslie bought me an engagement ring and we toured American air force bases in Germany. One side of the audience would be rednecks and the other side would be black guys, soul brothers. We played John Coltrane stuff, Nina Simone. You can guess which side liked us. After a year solid we had saved quite a bit of money and we bought a Telefunken reel-to-reel recorder and a cine-camera.

This Scottish band called Cartoone needed a guitarist to fill-in on a US Tour supporting Led Zeppelin. Les did it and came back changed: new haircut, new suede jacket. He'd met Cartoone's manager Mark London, who wrote To Sir With Love for Lulu, and also [Zep manager] Peter Grant. Mark and Peter loved Leslie's playing and wanted to put a new band around him, but he got them up to the Burns Howff in Glasgow to see Power, the group we'd formed with Jimmy Dewar, Colin Allen and John McGinnis.

The Howff's owner didn't want us to quit our residency and barricaded the door, but Peter said, "You silly little man. Get out of the fucking way." Mark and Peter started managing us and Peter re-named us Stone The Crows. Peter became like a father to me.

Getty (2), Alamy

GOODBYE MAY 1972

In London we stayed with Alex [Harvey] at this flat on Warwick Avenue. He was working at the musical Hair. We had a chair each to sleep in. We signed to Polydor and Peter Grant said, "Look, Zeppelin are taking off in America – start writing songs." He shared an office with Mickie Most and Mickie wanted to turn me into a pop star, but I was into soul and blues. When we did our first album [*Stone The Crows*, 1970] at Advision Studios, Yes were recording upstairs.

"Mickie Most wanted to turn me into a pop star."
MAGGIE BELL

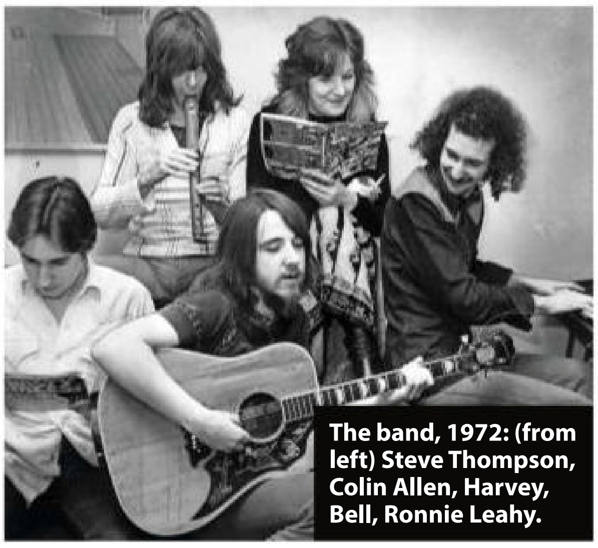
We had so many adventures. Stone The Crows were a busy, working band. We played the Fillmore West with Miles Davis. I think I won Melody Maker's Best Female Vocalist award five years in succession. At one point Phil Carson of Atlantic Records asked Leslie to back Aretha Franklin at the Hammersmith Odeon when her guitarist was ill and me and Trudie [Harvey, Alex's wife] baby-sat her two lovely, shy boys. They didn't understand a word I said.

John Peel was supportive, and we did some great live sessions for the BBC. We'd done the first three albums and recorded most of *Ontinuous Performance* when Leslie died in 1972. It was an utter tragedy. We were soundchecking at the Top Rank Club in Swansea. He told the audience of doctors and nurses, "bear with us, there's a technical hitch," then he touched his guitar and was instantly gone. It was an unearthed mike.

I was utterly heartbroken, but felt I owed it to the guys in the band to continue. Amazingly, Peter Green joined and we rehearsed for a few weeks. He'd been in rehab. Our big comeback was to be at the Lincoln Festival, but Peter phoned the night before and said, "Sorry – I can't do it. You're going to be famous and I don't want to be famous any more." Steve Howe [of Yes] filled in at the festival and we later continued with Jimmy McCulloch [Thunderclap Newman], but it just didn't work out. Leslie and I had grown up together, seen and done so much together. Colin Allen wrote the *Ontinuous Performance* song Sunset Cowboy for Leslie. I think I only sang it live three times. It was just too painful.

As told to James McNair

Repertoire Records' reissues of all four Stone The Crows albums and Maggie Bell's first two solo long-players are out now.



The band, 1972: (from left) Steve Thompson, Colin Allen, Harvey, Bell, Ronnie Leahy.

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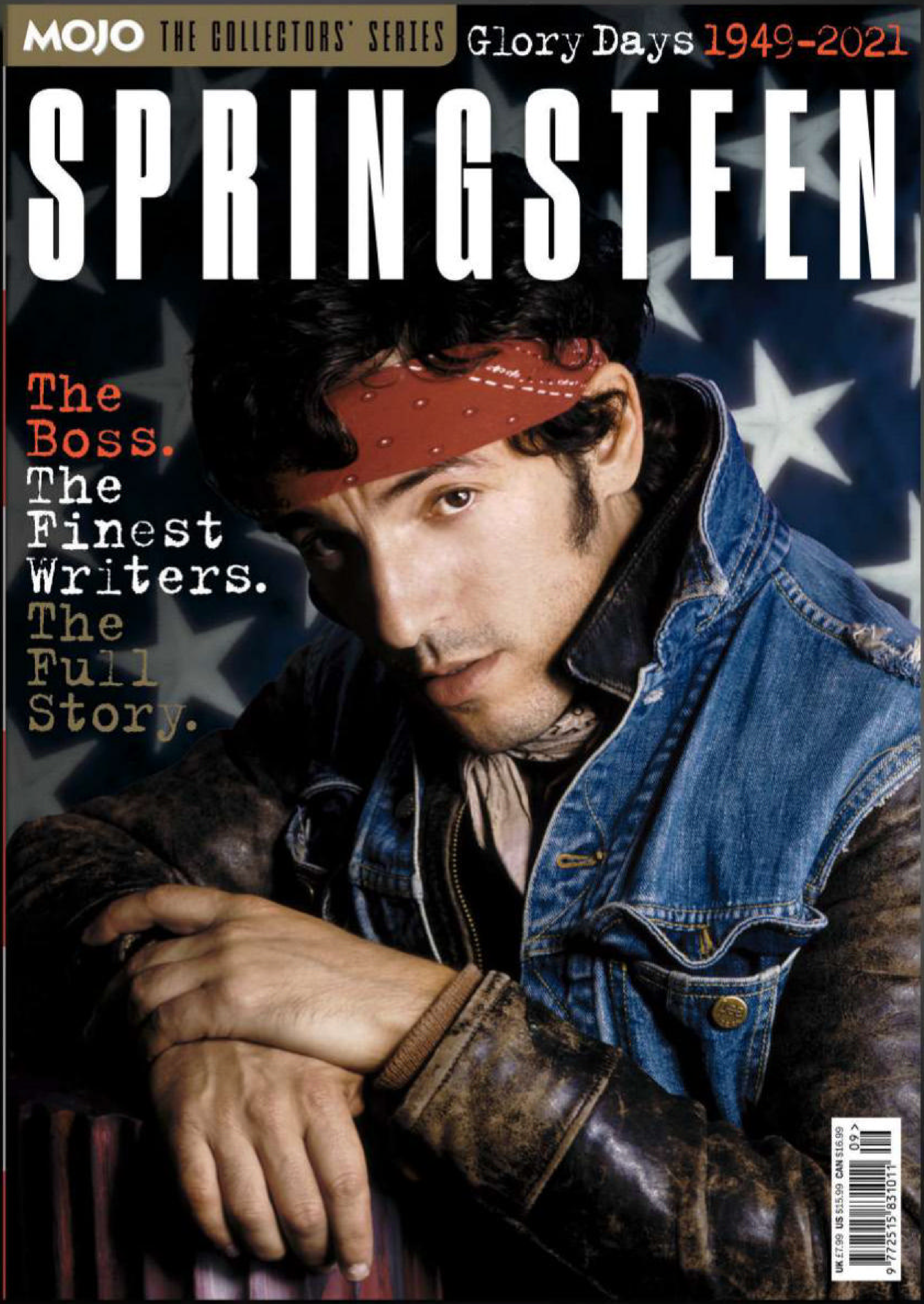
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